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## **EXPERIMENTS IN CIVILIZATION**

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London : Christophers. New York : Harcourt, Brace and Company. 1934.



PLATE I



MATKALI

[frontispiece

# EXPERIMENTS IN CIVILIZATION

THE EFFECTS OF EUROPEAN CULTURE  
ON A NATIVE COMMUNITY OF THE  
SOLOMON ISLANDS

By

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LONDON

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To  
PROFESSOR BRONISLAW MALINOWSKI



"Ples bilong mi i namberwan,  
Mi laikim im tasol.  
Mi tink long papa, mama tu,  
Mi krai long haus blong ol.  
Mi wok long ples i longwe tru,  
Mi stap no gud tasol.  
Ples bilong mi i namberwan,  
Mi laikim im tasol.

"Ol wantok, brader, susa tu,  
Long taim i wetim mi.  
Ol salim planti tok i kam,  
Ol tink mi lus long si.  
Nau mi kirap, mi go long ples,  
Mi no ken lusim mor.  
Ples bilong mi i namberwan,  
Mi laikim im tasol."

Literal translation :

Place belong me he number one,  
Me like him that's all.  
Me think along father, mother too,  
Me cry along house belong all.  
Me work along place he long way true,  
Me stop no good that's all.  
Place belong me he number one,  
Me like him that's all.

All one talk (i.e. my fellow tribesmen),  
brothers, sisters too,  
Long time they wait for me.  
All send plenty talk he come,  
All think me lost along sea.  
Now me get up, me go along place,  
Me no can lose him more.  
Place belong me he number one,  
Me like him that's all.

Taken from a pidgin English songbook published by a Roman Catholic Mission in New Guinea. Solomon Island pidgin is slightly, but not very markedly, different.



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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

The first part of this book, the section headed The Past, is intended to give a mere outline of the old native culture : my aim was to present just sufficient of this portion of my material to make the account of the changes going on to-day intelligible. The logical procedure would no doubt have been to publish this information in full, first postponing the treatment of the changes till later. The Past, however, is mainly of theoretical interest, whereas a study of present conditions may be of practical value to administrators and missionaries who are framing policies for native development. I have preferred in this instance, therefore, to sacrifice logic to expediency.

It gives me pleasure to have to state that my assertion in Chapter XI regarding the neglect of native education by the Solomon Islands Administration is no longer true. After the book had gone to press a start was made in the working out of a suitable scheme, Mr. W. C. Groves, an educationist with considerable experience in both New Guinea and Nauru, being appointed as supervisor.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks are due in the first place to the Australian National Research Council for financing my expedition to the Solomon Islands ; to Dr. Raymond Firth, Chairman of the Anthropological Committee of the Council, for arranging the necessary fellowship and grants ; and to Professor A. P. Elkin, his successor in that position, for allowing me complete freedom in the field.

The Western Pacific High Commission, of which the Solomon Islands Protectorate forms a part, gave the expedition official encouragement, and the Resident Commissioner of the Solomons, Mr. F. N. Ashley, was good enough to grant me special facilities with regard to Customs and transport. I am grateful, in addition, to Mr. J. C. Barley, now Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Protectorate but at that time District Officer of Malaita, for his advice regarding the choice of a native community for study : it was on his recommendation that I settled at Malu'u, North Malaita. I am also in debt to Major F. R. Hewitt, General Manager of Lever's Pacific Plantations, Ltd., for many acts of kindness.

The book itself owes much to the criticism of Dr. L. P. Mair, with whom every point was discussed in detail. Dr. Margaret Mead and Miss C. H. Wedgwood also read the MS. and gave me valuable advice, and particular chapters have benefited from the suggestions of Dr. R. Firth, Dr. R. Piddington, and Dr. J. Andrews.

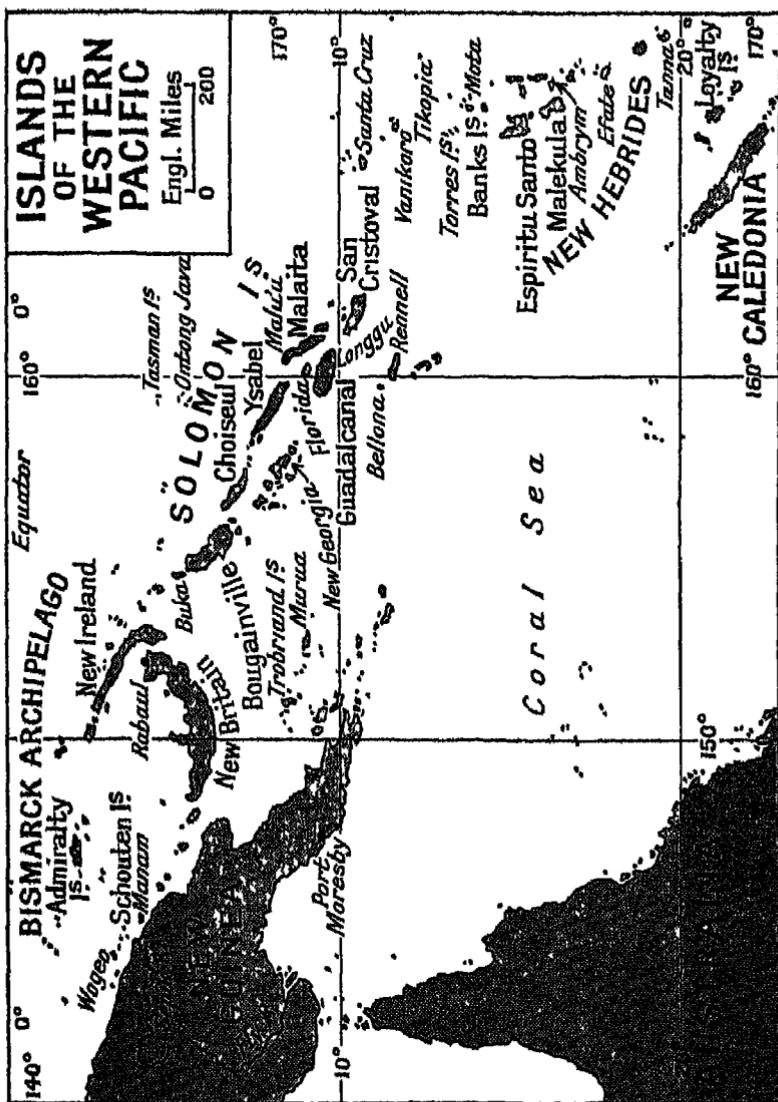
Finally, I have to express my keen appreciation of all that I owe to my teachers, Professor A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, who was responsible for my early training, and Professor Bronislaw Malinowski, with whom I studied for two years before setting out for the field. Their influence on my work will be apparent on every page, and in dedicating the book to Professor Malinowski I am only giving back what was partly his already.

H. I. H.

Department of Anthropology,  
University of Sydney.  
22nd June, 1939.

## NOTE ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF NATIVE WORDS

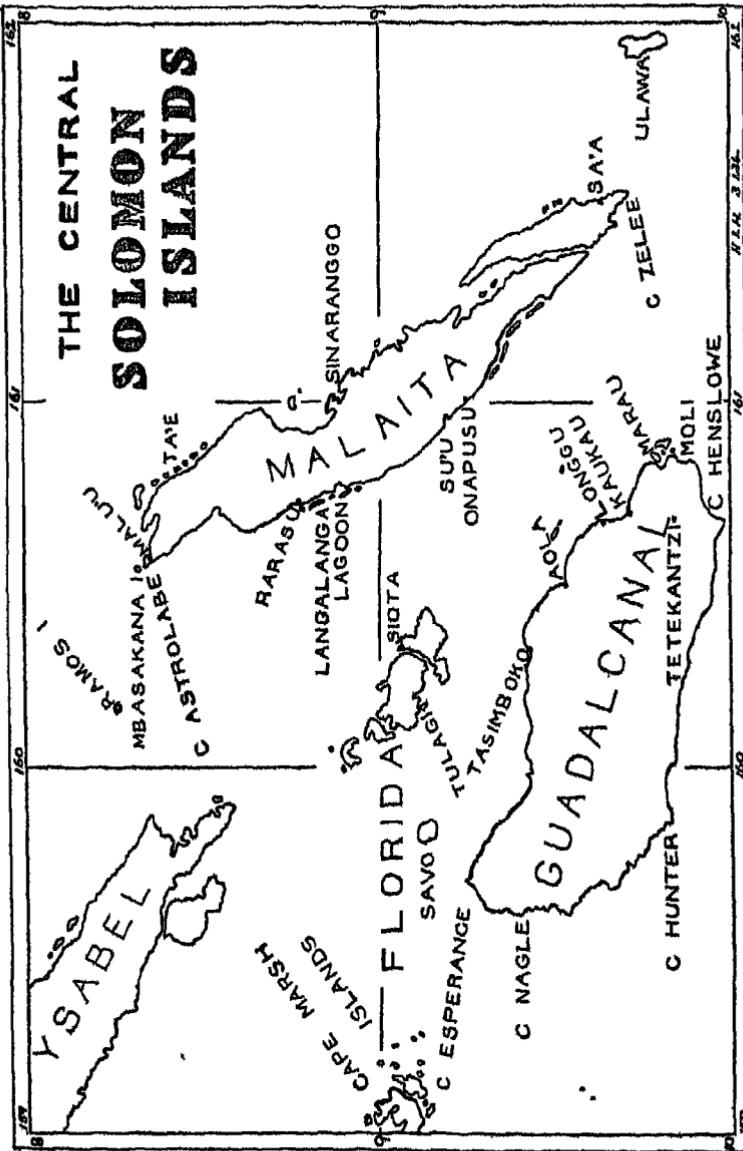
Vowels are to be pronounced as in Italian, consonants as in English : *th* is voiced, as in "thither"; *ng* as in "singer"; *ngg* as the *ng* in "finger". The apostrophe (e.g. in *ano'endo*) represents a glottal stop.





## INTRODUCTION

# THE CENTRAL SOLOMON ISLANDS



## INTRODUCTION

ANTHROPOLOGISTS are to-day interested in the working of social institutions as they can be observed in action rather than, as formerly, in seeking for traces of their remote origin. Accordingly untouched primitive societies are no longer regarded as the only fit subject for study—the field of investigation has been extended so as to take in native societies which have undergone more or less violent change through contact with Europeans. This study has an obvious theoretical importance, in that the process of culture change is a phenomenon of great sociological significance ; but it has in addition practical relevance, since the analysis of the actual results of attempts by European agents to transform native societies along lines which they consider desirable shows whether they are in fact achieving what they seek and whether there are any unsuspected developments of their activities.

The aim of this book is to present an investigation of the native community occupying the northern end of Malaita, one of the Solomon Islands, which have been subjected to European influences for a considerable period.

I have divided my information into three sections, under the titles The Past, The Present, and The Future. The first is devoted to an account of the culture of the people in olden days—their social organization, economics, laws, and religion, as well as the interrelation of these various elements. Using this as a groundwork, I have then examined the results of European contact, and, finally, in the section headed The Future, drawn upon material from Africa, where colonial policies are for the most part more progressive than in the South Seas, with the object not only of indicating possible lines of development, but also of furnishing, it is hoped, practical assistance to administrators and missionaries.

Culture change is dealt with most fully in the section where the present situation is discussed. Three agencies are at work, the Administration, commerce, and missions. The Administration has suppressed raiding and appointed native

## INTRODUCTION

headmen to help keep the peace ; labour agents and planters first took the natives away to work overseas and now, since expatriation is forbidden, employ them on local estates ; and missions are seeking to convert the people from their heathen ways to Christianity. The suppression of raiding has led to the substitution of our judicial system for the law of an eye for an eye, payment of plantation labour has resulted in the adoption of a new system of economy, and acceptance of Christianity has meant the abandonment of sacrifices and the accompanying festivals.

All this must have been foreseen by those responsible for the changes. But European contact has had other effects which were not so easy to predict, and Administrative officials and missionaries are, indeed, still very largely unaware of them. The old system of leadership, for example, attacked on all sides, has practically collapsed. The authority of the headmen over their followers depended in the past on such factors as the protection they gave, their great stocks of valuables, and the sacrifices they made to secure the goodwill of the ancestors. To-day, on the other hand, order is preserved by the Government, and offenders are imprisoned ; young men, since they alone are employed as labourers, possess far more wealth than their elders ; and, where Christianity has been adopted, sacrifices can no longer be offered. Robbed of their supports headmen therefore have very little influence.

Other unpredicted results of contact have been that the mission attitude to sorcery has led to increasing disregard for property rights, the suppression of "bride-prico" has had considerable repercussions on economics in general and marriage customs in particular, and schools, despite the useful instruction provided, have had a disastrous influence on family life.

Before presenting the main substance of the book, however, I think it advisable to devote this Introduction to a brief account of the history of European relations with the Solomons from the discovery of the islands in the sixteenth century until the appointment of a British Resident in 1896.

## DISCOVERY OF THE SOLOMONS

The Solomon group consists of a double line of islands of volcanic origin extending for 600 miles in a south-easterly

direction from New Britain in the Bismarck Archipelago. There are seven large islands, Bougainville, Choiseul, Ysabel, and Malaita in one line and New Georgia, Guadalcanal, and San Cristoval in the other, together with hundreds of smaller ones. Bougainville, with Buka at its northern end, forms part of the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, administered by Australia, but the remainder are included in a political unit known as the British Solomon Island Protectorate.

The islands lie close to the Equator, and as the rainfall is heavy—200 inches per annum is not at all unusual—they are all clothed with dense tropical forests. The larger of them are extremely mountainous, and the scenery is of a sombre grandeur unapproached in temperate climates. Guadalcanal, the largest island in the Protectorate, though no bigger than an English county, rises to a peak more than 8000 feet in height.

There is no stranger story in the history of maritime discovery than that of how the Solomon Islands were found and then completely lost for 200 years. With the exception of New Guinea, which was visited by Portuguese and Spanish navigators early in the sixteenth century, these were the first islands in the southern Pacific to be seen by Europeans. They had been accurately described more than half a century before the discovery of the north coast of Australia by the Dutch, and more than two centuries before Captain Cook visited the eastern coast of the continent. In 1568 an expedition fitted out by the Spanish Government spent six months among the islands, and the leader was so impressed that he determined to found a colony. Thirty years later he set out with a party of colonists and four ships, but after two of these had been wrecked and he himself had perished the survivors returned with the report that the Solomons could not be found. From that time onwards many ships went to seek them in vain, and they were not rediscovered until 1768. Still more remarkable is the fact that their discoverer, the French navigator Bougainville, sailed away doubting their existence. On the chart prepared at the conclusion of his voyage he named his "discovery" Archipel des Grandes Cyclades, but five degrees farther north and thirty degrees to the east he put in another group and wrote alongside, "Solomon Islands, of which the existence and position are doubtful."

## INTRODUCTION

The original Spanish expedition sailed from Callao in Peru during November, 1567, in two ships, the *Capitana* of 250 tons and the *Almirante* of 107 tons, under the command of Alvaro de Mendaña de Neyra, with the object of finding the great southern continent which cosmographeis of the time said must of necessity exist to balance Europe and Asia. This was an age of gold, says one historian, and to the Spaniards the whole world was yellow. They imagined that the continent would be full of riches ready for the taking.

Fifty-seven days after leaving Peru an island of the Ellice group, identified as Nukufetau, was sighted, but owing to strong currents landing was impossible. Then seventeen days later, on 1st February, 1568, a coral atoll was seen and named Candelaria, this being Candlemas eve. The atoll is now known as Ontong Java, the name bestowed upon it in 1643 by Tasman. A storm was encountered on the following day, and although the Solomons are only 150 miles to the south-west, they were not sighted till 7th February. "Everybody received the news with great joy and gratitude" says the account of Gallego, the Chief Pilot, "for the grace that God had vouchsafed to us through the intercession of the Virgin of Good Fortune, the Glorious Mother of God, whom we all worshipped, to whom we all prayed, singing the *Te Deum Laudamus.*"

As the ships passed through the reef the planet Venus was seen over the main topsail although it was only 10 o'clock in the morning. Not knowing that this is a common phenomenon in these seas, and taking the star to be the same as that sent to guide the Magi, Mendaña called the harbour Bahia de la Estrella (Bay of the Star), the name by which it is still known. The island he called after Saint Ysabel (*Anglice Elizabeth*), because the expedition had sailed from Callao on her name day.

A brigantine was built for carrying out exploration, and, although no continent was found, everywhere there were more and more islands. Several of these, including Florida, Guadalcanal, and San Cristoval, were visited and given their present names.<sup>1</sup> Malaita was called Isla de Ramos, although it was recorded that the natives used "Malaita". Actually the native name is Mala, and Mala-ita means "Mala over there".

<sup>1</sup> Florida is known locally, however, as Nggela, and San Cristoval as Makira. Guadalcanal is often referred to as Solomon.

## INTRODUCTION

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Relations with the natives were by no means friendly, though this was not the fault of the Spaniards, for Mendaña was usually most humane. Several persons were killed, and if the party had not had guns they would certainly have been wiped out. No gold was seen, but the miners in the party were agreed that the country promised well. It was thought at first that the head of certain clubs was made from an auriferous metal, and although the leaders quickly proved that it was only iron pyrites later events showed that the underlings remained unconvinced. Finally on 7th August a "parliament" was called to decide what should be done. There were three alternatives, to explore further, to make a settlement in the Solomons, or to return home. The Franciscans in the party voted for the first alternative, the soldiers for the second, and the navigation officers for the third. Agreement was only reached when it was pointed out that the ammunition, on which their safety depended, was running short and that the ships were so worm-eaten that unless a start was made soon return would be impossible. Four days later they sailed for home, and after almost incredible hardships the ships reached Callao in July, 1569.

"It is difficult for anyone unacquainted with the ocean miscalled the Pacific to realize the reckless daring of the enterprise. Leaving Peru in the month of November, with the hurricane season just approaching ; crossing an ocean more than 7000 miles in width, beset with unknown coral reefs, in crazy vessels unprotected from the teredo, and almost incapable of beating to windward ; with the prevailing wind behind them, and a 'dead beat' all the way homeward ; depending on provisions that no master, in the worst days of our merchant marine, would have dared to put to sea with, the adventurers had a thousand chances to one against ever finding their way home again. And yet, though they parted company for a time, in nineteen months both vessels were safe at anchor again in Callao with a loss of less than one-third of their ships' companies."<sup>1</sup>

Mendaña did not mention the name Solomon Islands in his official report, but it appears to have been in common use soon after his return. The discovery had somehow been identified with Ophir, the land of fabulous riches from

<sup>1</sup> Lord Amherst and B. Thomson, *Discovery of the Solomon Islands*, Hakluyt Society Publication, London, 1901, vol. i, p. vi.

## INTRODUCTION

whence Solomon obtained the gold for Jerusalem. Some writers have suggested that the explanation is to be found in tavern talk about the gold-headed clubs of the natives and the soil which showed such promise of the precious metal.

No gold had been found, but as the land was extensive and apparently rich Mendoza petitioned Philip II of Spain for permission to establish a permanent colony where he and his family should rule for two generations. This was granted in 1574, but he did not set out for over twenty years, having been delayed in part no doubt by the Spanish quarrel with England. The expedition, consisting of four ships with 368 emigrants, men, women and children, sailed from Peru in 1595. They reached Santa Cruz, a little to the east of the Solomons, but the attempt to found the colony was utterly disastrous. Dissensions broke out, many died of disease, and there was trouble with the natives. Finally Mendoza himself succumbed, and it was decided to re-embark and seek Manila, in the Philippines. Two ships had been lost, but the other two sailed for a couple of days in a south-westerly direction seeking San Cristoval, in the Solomons. The distance from Santa Cruz is only 200 miles, and it is remarkable that no land was seen. Either the wind must have been light or the weather thick, for the island is mountainous and visible for a considerable distance. Even when the course was changed for the Philippines the ships must for days have been almost in sight of the Solomons.

Another attempt to find the Solomons was made in 1605, this time under the command of Quiros, who had been Chief Pilot to Mendoza on the second voyage ten years before. He probably reached the Society Islands, though some authorities are doubtful, and then sailed on and discovered the Duff group, Tikopia Island near Santa Cruz, and the largest of the islands now known as the New Hebrides, which he named Australia del Espiritu Santo, believing that it, together with the long islands Aurora and Pentecost, were part of a great continent. The crew of Quiros's own ship then mutinied and compelled him to return, but the other vessel, under Luis Vaez de Torres, sailed on to the west and passed through the strait which separates Australia from New Guinea.

The accounts of these Spanish voyages have in some cases been lost altogether, and none was published until

comparatively recently. The result was that for all the good geographical science derived from them they might just as well not have been undertaken. All the discoveries had to be rediscovered, and when the accounts were at last published they served only as material for speculation and controversy. Thus when in 1616 the Dutchmen Le Maire and Schouten saw a coral atoll in latitude six degrees south they did not know it was Mendaña's Candelaria, and neither did Tasman when in 1643 he named it Ontong Java.

Mendaña had supposed that the Solomons lay somewhere between seven and nineteen degrees of south latitude about 5000 miles west of Peru. Actually this is an underestimate by about 2000 miles, due to the fact that the instruments of the time were defective. But from 1600 onwards the islands found various new resting places. In Dudley's *Arcano de Mare* (1646) they are identified with the Marquesas; Delisle early in the eighteenth century suppressed them altogether, and Dalrymple as late as 1790 stated that they lay off the coast of New Britain in the Bismarck Archipelago. One navigator, when a canary perched on his rigging in thirty-four degrees north latitude, inferred that he must be near the Solomons! For a time in fact the name covered every discovery made in both the north and south Pacific. Yet, when at last they were found once more they were not recognized.

Carteret sighted Malaita in 1767, and Bougainville landed on some of the western islands in the year following. A year later again Surville visited Ysabel and San Cristoval, which he called Terre des Arsacides (Land of the Assassins). French geographers at home were of the opinion that these new discoveries were the Solomons of Manduria, and when La Pérouse was dispatched on a voyage of exploration by Louis XVI he was instructed to settle the matter. Unfortunately he was wrecked at Vanikoro, near Santa Cruz, and it is not known whether he even visited the Solomons.

At about this time Lieutenant Shortland, in command of two convict transports which had formed part of the first fleet to Botany Bay, sailed from the new colony to Canton. On 31st July, 1788, he sighted San Cristoval, Guadalcanal, and several smaller islands. Still convinced that he had discovered a new archipelago he gave them the name of New Georgia.

Three years later a small French fleet under D'Entrecasteaux, sent out to seek news of La Pérouse, visited the western Solomons. In 1838 D'Urville, another Frenchman, also visited the group, and the most northerly and the most southerly points of Malaita are still known respectively as Cape Astrolabe and Cape Zelée after his two ships. This may in a sense be regarded as the last voyage of discovery to the Solomons, though the coasts are still very poorly, and in some cases inaccurately, charted, and the interior of the islands very largely unknown.

#### TRADERS AND LABOUR AGENTS

It appears that by this time whalers and trading vessels were already in the habit of visiting the islands. The whalers had as their object the purchase of fresh vegetables, hogs, and water, as well as the "refreshment" of their crews, and the traders sought turtle-shell, bêche-de-mer, and sandalwood. It is believed that the name Rendova, an island off New Georgia, is a corruption of "rendezvous", for the natives deny that it is a local word.

Information about the conditions under which trading was carried on are given by Andrew Cheyne, master of the brig *Naiad*, which visited several of the islands during the period 1844-7. The natives, he says, will give up to three pounds of turtle-shell for a small hatchet, but he advised that not one of them be allowed on board, and none of the crew be permitted to land, no matter what the reason, for even before that date several ships had been taken and the crews murdered. "Nothing can be said in favour of the Solomon Islanders," he states. "They are without exception the most treacherous and bloodthirsty race in the western Pacific."<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately these tendencies were aggravated by the firearms and ammunition which traders were accustomed to give in return for produce.

Visits by traders continued, and in 1865 the kidnapping of natives for service on overseas plantations began. We first hear of the labour traffic in the Pacific in 1863, when Peruvians visited Easter Island and the Gilbert and Ellice group with

<sup>1</sup> A. Cheyne, *Description of Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean*, London, 1852.

the object of carrying off natives to work on the guano islands. Two years later a few natives from the Gilberts were brought to Fiji for work on the cotton plantations, and shortly afterwards "blackbirding ships", as they were called, began to visit the Solomons. The natives were invited on board and forced to go below, and the hatch coverings were then quickly replaced so that the ships could set sail before those on shore realized what had happened. One of the most notorious of the blackbirders was the *Carl*, which was disguised as a trader. When a sufficient number of canoes had come alongside with produce they were upset with grappling irons, and the boats were then lowered to pick up such of the occupants as had not been drowned. On one occasion when the poor creatures in the hold, driven mad with fear and suffering, began to quarrel, shot after shot was fired amongst them until seventy had been killed or wounded. These were thrown into the sea, dead and wounded together.

In these early days Fiji was not yet a British colony, and there was no attempt at control. A prosecution did take place in Sydney, however, in about 1870, when a young man named Hovell was tried and sentenced to death for shooting two natives on board the *Young Australia*. Once Fiji was annexed various regulations with respect to the traffic were passed, and all ships were compelled to carry a Government agent, though more often than not these were men of the worst possible type and only too ready to accept bribes.

In about 1875 the sugar planters of Queensland began to demand labour, which was also supplied from the islands. The miners on the goldfields, thinking that cheap labour would lead to European unemployment, were very much against the traffic, and in 1885 pressure was brought to bear on the Government for the appointment of a Royal Commission. The report of this Commission stated that the natives were undoubtedly enticed on board blackbirding ships under false pretences, that the method of recruiting was cruelly deceptive and quite illegal, that a method of deliberate fraud was used on engaging the labourers, and that while some only were forcibly kidnapped, all were lured on board by false statements.

One practice of the blackbirders deserves special mention. They probably never actually took part in headhunting raids, but in return for recruits they sometimes transported a

## INTRODUCTION

shipload of warriors to some unprotected village where heads were ready for the taking.

After the report of the Commission the traffic was for a time forbidden, but a few years later it began again and did not finally cease till 1903. One writer estimates that in thirty years over 60,000 South Sea island natives were brought to Queensland, and that in addition to these many thousands were also taken to Fiji. The death-rate was from seven to eleven in every 100, although the natives were all in the prime of life.<sup>1</sup> Many remained away from their homes for ten years or more, and it is not surprising that the islands became sadly depopulated.

Unlike the Polynesians, the Solomon islanders seem never to have given a warm welcome to even harmless strangers, and it was not to be expected that they would tamely submit to all this cruelty and injustice. In 1875 the brig *James Birney* was taken at Ontong Java and nine Europeans and two natives killed, and in the same year Commodore Goodenough and two seamen from H.M.S. *Pearl* were murdered in Santa Cruz. Three years later two traders in Guadalcanal and one in San Cristoval were killed, and a year later again Guadalcanal had still another murder. In 1880 four vessels were attacked and fourteen Europeans killed, and during the next couple of years the entire crews of five ships and a party of French scientists were murdered. One contemporary writer, with only slight exaggeration, says that the landmarks of the coast are the records of massacre and revenge, and hardly a bay or inlet exists but can boast a tragedy.<sup>2</sup>

Reprisals were attempted by such of Her Majesty's ships of war as happened from time to time to visit the islands, but these were completely unsatisfactory, since little effort was made to discover the real culprits. The ships stood off and shelled a village, or else a landing party burnt a few houses. Murders of Europeans—who often no doubt richly deserved their fate—continued until the islands were brought under effective control by the Protectorate Government.

<sup>1</sup> T. Dunbabin, *Slavers of the South Seas*, Sydney, 1935, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> Vide W. T. Wawn, *The South Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Traffic*, London, 1893; and W. Coote, *The Western Pacific*, London, 1883. An account of the labour trade in the New Hebrides given in T. Harrisson, *Savage Civilisation*, London, 1937, chap. iv, is also of interest.

## MISSIONS

Missions, too, were not idle. In 1845 the French Mission of the Society of Mary sent out a party consisting of a bishop, six fathers, and a number of lay brothers. They landed on San Cristoval but later moved to the more centrally situated island of Ysabel. The bishop, however, was murdered, and the others returned to San Cristoval. Ill-fortune still pursued them there, and three fathers were killed in quick succession and a fourth succumbed to malaria. The survivors withdrew, and an interval of fifty years elapsed before this mission was again established.

The Church of England became interested in the Solomons at about the same time. Owing to some mistake the limits of the see of New Zealand had been fixed at thirty-four degrees north instead of south latitude. Bishop Selwyn, taking this as a sign that he was meant to bring Christianity to the Melanesians, set out in 1849 on a tour of the islands. The Melanesian Mission of the Church of England was founded in the following year as a direct result of the journey. A vessel, the *Southern Cross*, was purchased, and a scheme for bringing natives to New Zealand for instruction put into operation. The first station to be established in the islands was that of Mota in the Banks group, south-east of the Solomons, and very largely on this account the Mota language has been the principal medium of instruction throughout the sphere of influence of the Mission. Patteson, a member of Selwyn's staff, was consecrated in 1861 as the first bishop of Melanesia, and some years later the native college was moved from New Zealand to Norfolk Island. European missionaries set up permanent stations in the Solomons in 1870 but for many years concentrated on Florida and Ysabel, and only within recent times turned their attention elsewhere. A station was established on Florida at a place called Siota in 1895, and in 1920 the headquarters of the Mission were moved thither from Norfolk Island. Native teachers still receive their instruction at the Siota college.<sup>1</sup>

Three other Missions now operate in the Solomons, a Methodist society, the Seventh Day Adventists, and the South Sea Evangelical Mission. This last is an independent

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* E. S. Armstrong, *History of the Melanesian Mission*, London, 1900; and S. W. Artless, *The Church in Melanesia*, London, 1936.

## INTRODUCTION

organization with Baptist leanings which began work amongst the labourers in Queensland and only moved over to the islands after the blackbirding traffic had ceased. The headquarters and college where native teachers are trained is situated at Onepusu on Malaita.

### ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROTECTORATE

No record is available of the first European residents in the Solomons, nor of the dates in which they settled. Cheyne, who visited the group in the mid forties, mentions finding three runaway sailors on one island, and it is possible that there were others elsewhere. In 1875 a sailor, John Renton, the sole survivor of a wreck, was rescued on Malaita after a residence of eight years. By this time, however, a number of traders were living at various points on the coast, though fifteen years later a visitor reports that the European population, "fixed and floating," was considerably under thirty.<sup>1</sup>

A British Protectorate was declared over certain of the islands in the year 1893, and over others in 1899 and 1900. A Resident Commissioner was appointed in 1896, at which time the European population numbered fifty, all males. Four only were missionaries, belonging to the Melanesian Mission, and the rest traders. The Commissioner was, and still is, responsible to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, who is stationed in Fiji. Legislation is based on the Pacific Order in Council, 1893, and such Regulations as may be issued by the Commissioner under powers conferred by that Order. The most important of the latter relate to the prohibition of the supply of fire-arms and intoxicating liquor to natives, and the regulation of their employment on plantations and at other work.

The Resident Commissioner established himself on the island of Tulagi off the west coast of Florida. This has now become the chief port and commercial centre of the group, though it remains the smallest capital in the British Empire. Government stations have also been established on most of the other islands, where district officers are in permanent residence.

Planting operations began immediately after the declaration

<sup>1</sup> C. M. Woodford, *A Naturalist among the Headhunters*, Sydney, 1890.

of the Protectorate, long before the suppression of native warfare. At the present time 50,000 acres are under coconut cultivation, and copra (the dried meat of the coconut) is by far the most important export. Europeans and the few resident Asiatics may hold land under three different titles, freehold, Crown leasehold, and native leasehold. The Crown agreed to recognize purchases made from natives before 1893, although in many cases large areas had been obtained in return for the most trivial objects, and these became freehold land. Subsequent private transactions were declared to be illegal, but the Resident Commissioner was empowered to proclaim as Crown land all areas "not required by the natives". These were then made available for lease. Land may also be leased directly from natives at rentals fixed by themselves, but negotiations have to be carried on through an official, who has the right to forbid proceedings if he considers that the people really require the area for themselves and ought not to part with it.

Other exports from the Solomons include bêche-de-mer, shell (mainly trochus), ivory-nuts, and timber. The value of exports for the year ending 31st March, 1933, was £198,888, and that of imports £168,261. The European population at that time numbered 483, most of whom were either government officials, missionaries, or plantation employees.

#### THE NATIVES

The total native population of the Protectorate in 1933 was 93,415, of whom over 40,000 were concentrated on the one island of Malaita. They are predominantly of Melanesian stock, though there is considerable variation not only between individuals, but between the inhabitants of the different islands. The people of the western end of the group are coal black, but those of the east are much fairer, especially in Malaita, where some are pale bronze. The majority are of medium height, but their features are by European standards good. The nose is not as a rule very broad, nor are the lips particularly thick. The hair may be quite black, but in the eastern islands it is more usually brown, and in Malaita it is often naturally chestnut or straw-coloured. (In other islands this effect is sometimes achieved with the aid of bleaching preparations.) In texture it is somewhat

coarse, and if allowed to grow it stands out from the head in a fuzzy mass. The women generally shave their heads, but the men grow long hair and spend hours grooming themselves.

My own experience with these people has been fairly extensive. I first went to the Solomons in 1927 and have revisited them twice, spending in all two and a half years there. During this period I carried out intensive field work in three areas, Ontong Java, Guadalcanal, and Malaita.

### MALAITA

This long narrow island, which has a coastline of over 250 miles, is roughly 1500 square miles in area. It is by far the most thickly populated island in the group, and for this reason, among others, the Administration has always discouraged planters from taking up land there. At the present time there is only one small group of plantations, situated on the west coast, and it seems unlikely that there will ever be more. Apart from two or three planters the European population, which is very small, is made up entirely of officials and missionaries.

I am informed by Mr. Norman Deck, of the Evangelical Mission, that eighteen different dialects are spoken on the island, but some of these are very similar, and they can probably be grouped into about five or six separate "languages". I myself am acquainted only with one, that spoken by the people among whom I worked, known as To'ambaita, from *to'a* = people and *mbaita* = big. (It is to be noted that the natives do not call themselves "the big people": this is merely the name of their language.)

Differences of environment, and hence of economic pursuits, divide the Malaita natives into two distinct groups, known locally as the bush and saltwater peoples respectively. It is presumed that the bush people were the first arrivals and that they established themselves all over the island. Another migration came later, but these newcomers were unable to gain a footing on the mainland and were compelled to retreat to the tiny islets off the coast. In later years, as the people increased, these became so overcrowded that they were forced to build up new islets by hand. The coastal lagoons are now so thickly populated that it is often difficult

PLATE II



THE MARKET—EXCHANGING VEGETABLES FOR FISH

FIG. 1, p. 11



to walk between the houses and quite impossible for the people to grow crops. The bush folk, on the other hand, are as a rule without direct access to the sea and hence unable to catch fish. Markets are accordingly held regularly so that the bush natives can hand over vegetables and receive in exchange fish from their saltwater neighbours (Plate II).

The people with whom I lived were a bush group. Their culture probably differs very little from that of the other natives living in the interior, but as I know nothing at first hand of the rest of the island my remarks from now on are to be understood as referring solely to this one area.

The To'ambaita-speaking folk of north Malaita do not live in villages but in isolated homesteads, occupied as a rule by three or four brothers, or other close relatives, and their families. In a few large homesteads one may find as many as thirty persons, but the majority are much smaller, and many have only half a dozen. The average is probably between twelve and fifteen.

The houses are generally perched on the top of a ridge and command a superb view of the surrounding countryside. There is little flat land, and the settlements in consequence have no regular plan. One house, however, is always much more imposing than the rest (Plate III). This is reserved for the menfolk, for in Malaita husband and wife have separate dwellings and always sleep apart. This building, unlike the others, has a veranda in front, where the men sit and chat after the day's work is done. In shape it is rectangular, about 25 feet long by 15 feet broad. The walls are made either from slabs of wood or else plaited canes, often in two colours, and the roof is thatched with sheets of yellow palm leaves. Inside one sees a few mats spread out to serve as beds with fires in between to provide warmth at night, and suspended from the roof are various weapons and tools.

The women's houses, smaller but no less well built with palm leaf walls and thatch, cluster round about (Plate IV). Instead of the veranda they usually have a semicircular extension like an apse, in which the principal doorway is cut. This part of the house serves both as kitchen and dining-room, where the whole family, including the father, assembles daily for a more or less formal evening meal. The rectangular portion is used as a sleeping room for the woman and her

children, and the opposite end from the apse, "the bottom of the house," as the natives call it, is reserved entirely for her use. Just as women never enter the men's house, so a husband refrains from trespassing into his wife's domain. This is more than a mere convention, for it is thought that offenders are liable to supernatural punishment.

Nowadays the whole settlement is often surrounded by a palisade or stone wall to keep out the pigs, but in olden days the men's house alone was enclosed. Generally there are also a few clumps of scarlet and yellow Crotons and some plants of the Cordyline species. If the ground is sufficiently level a patch may be laid out with clover, which looks an even brighter green than usual against the red clay soil.

The settlements are separated by stretches of jungle so thick that the narrow paths are often mere tunnels through which a pale green light filters from overhead. The country is broken and rough, and in order to reach a near neighbour it is sometimes necessary to drop into a deep ravine and climb the other side. Even the precipices are clothed with tall trees, clinging lianas, and vines.

Here and there the growth is cut away, and one comes upon a garden surrounded by a stout fence to keep out the wild pigs. The principal crop is taro, but sweet potatoes and bananas are also grown, as well as a few yams. The last are planted only in September or October, but taro, sweet potatoes, and bananas are cultivated the whole year round. The monsoon and the trade wind divide the year into two parts, but as the temperature remains constant and the rainfall is evenly distributed the main crops are not in any way affected by these seasonal changes. It is probable that even yams would grow throughout the whole year if the experiment were tried : they certainly do so only 100 miles away in Guadalcanal. Tobacco is also cultivated, for both sexes are inveterate smokers. One cannot speak with certainty, but it seems probable that this has always been the case and that the plant was introduced in pre-European times. Maize has been tried recently, but so far is not grown to any considerable extent.

Garden work occupies the greater portion of the natives' time, for they have to grow large quantities of produce not only for their own immediate use, but also for exchange with

the saltwater people. They cultivate the ground, in fact, to provide themselves with fish as well as vegetables. The work would be sufficiently exhausting in any climate, but in the tropics it becomes doubly so. First the trees are cut down and the fence built, and then the rubbish has to be burnt. The ground is not dug all over, for the natives have no spades but only digging sticks sharpened at one end. These are thrust into the ground and brought up sideways, thus leaving a hole where the young taro shoots or yam tubers may be planted. About six months have to elapse before the crop is ripe, and during this period the plots have to be carefully weeded. When the roots are dug up the main tool is again the digging stick, though to-day cane knives twelve inches long are also used. The ground is not very fertile, and after one crop of taro or yams has been grown, and perhaps one of sweet potatoes, a new patch of jungle has to be cleared.

Another important source of food is the Canarium almond. There are a considerable number of these trees, all individually owned, and in the season when the nuts are ripe the men have a particularly busy time. The trees are of immense height and when one of the largest is being stripped as many as four men may have to work for several hours. Scarcely a year passes without at least one serious accident, which may end fatally. The nuts are brought home, shelled and roasted in bamboos, which are then stored in racks over the family fireplace. When required for eating the nuts are reheated, crushed, and mixed with mashed taro to make a sort of pudding.

Mention must also be made of the pig. Each family keeps several, though they are killed only on the occasion of feasts. The animals are hand-fed twice a day and often treated as pets. In olden days they were sometimes herded at night in the women's houses, but this has, of course, been forbidden by the Administration. Until recently a Regulation was in force compelling the natives to keep their pigs in sties, but it caused such dissatisfaction that it is now in abeyance, and the animals are allowed to wander about provided the homesteads are fenced to prevent them from approaching the dwellings. A few wild pigs are also to be found in the bush, but most of these were killed off soon after the introduction of fire-arms.

## INTRODUCTION

## CONDITIONS OF FIELD WORK

I lived in Malaita for six months, from June to December, 1933, selecting as my headquarters a native house, which had been built to accommodate district officials on patrol, on the shores of Malu'u harbour. At first the people thought I was connected with the Administration, but the idea was soon dropped when it was seen that I had no official status.

This spot was one of the most beautiful I have ever seen. In front, between two streams, a cleared space led down to the beach, and immediately behind a series of terraces rose higher and higher to a range some 2000 feet above sea-level. From the top it was possible to see not only the whole of the northern end of Malaita with the islets off the east coast, but also Guadalcanal, Florida, and Ysabel.

I used to get my supplies from a trading schooner which visited the harbour once every six or eight weeks (accidents permitting). A mission vessel called in two or three times during the six months, and the district officer made two patrols. My nearest neighbour, a missionary, I never saw, as he lived about thirty miles away on the east coast.

All the natives speak pidgin English, the *lingua franca* of the western Pacific, so that I could make my wants known almost at once. I was also fortunate in having a slight acquaintance with the local language, derived from a translation of the New Testament and a grammar.<sup>1</sup> This enabled me to speak a few halting sentences when I landed, and by the time I left I was fairly fluent, though often ungrammatical. The finer shades of the language were, naturally, beyond me—they would have taken me far more than six months to master, especially without a dictionary—but I gathered the general meaning of most of what I heard.

At first I used regular informants, conversing in pidgin and gradually substituting more and more of the native language. Then after a time I began to gather information by taking part in the native life and listening to ordinary talk in houses and gardens. The framework of the culture came from the informants, but I learnt of its inner workings by direct observation.

I do not wish to imply by this that I was accepted by the

<sup>1</sup> *Na Alaofua Falu*, British and Foreign Bible Society, London, 1923; and S. H. Ray, *Melanesian Island Languages*, Cambridge, 1926, pp. 498—513.

natives entirely as one of themselves. Various travellers from time to time claim to have been "initiated into the tribe", but I venture to doubt whether any European has been so treated in seriousness. If an initiation ceremony was in fact performed the object was probably flattery—with the object of securing presents. The appearance and different mode of life of the white man establishes a distinction between him and the native too great for him ever to be completely accepted as a member of the local community. An anthropologist also has his notebooks and camera to attend to. Certainly these are not always in evidence—often the people had no idea that I was hurrying home from a gathering to record some gossip I had heard while the impression was still fresh in my mind—but the natives always know that, although their aims and ambitions may be appreciated, the field worker does not, and indeed cannot, actually share them. I remained always a sympathetic, and I hope understanding, outsider—and was often for that very reason admitted to secrets. In order to make my position clear perhaps I may be pardoned if I quote the compliment my friend Maekali paid me when making a formal speech of farewell on behalf of the assembled people on the night before my departure. "At last we have found a European who is a black man," he said, "even if his skin is white."

Fortunately I had plenty of material to observe. In olden days the foreshores had been a sort of no man's land between the bush and saltwater peoples, but as soon as the Administration was firmly established families began to move down from the interior, and at the present time the whole coastal belt is thickly populated. There were several settlements close to my house, and I was able to watch the daily doings of upwards of 150 individuals. The settlements in the hills behind were also within a convenient distance, and in an area of perhaps 25 square miles there were about 1000 natives.

A mission station had been founded not far away more than thirty years before, and the majority of the people who live near the coast have been Christians for a considerable period. The fact that the young men have been going away to work for Europeans on plantations for many years has also had a considerable reaction on the old native culture. The people of the hills in the interior, on the other hand,

## INTRODUCTION

have not seen nearly so much of the white man, and in many settlements life goes on now in very much the same manner that it did a century ago. I was thus placed in an ideal position for finding out what the effects of European culture are : if I attended a church service, for example, I could always go and see a heathen ceremony almost immediately afterwards. I had no need to reconstruct the aboriginal culture from the memories of the old men and the few elements still remaining, since it was there as a living reality right before my eyes. My plan was to spend a week or two on the coast and then retreat into the hills for a few days.

Thus, although the first section of the book has been for convenience headed the Past, it must be borne in mind that many settlements still carry on their affairs in the manner described. Except sometimes when speaking of fighting, which is now prohibited by the Administration, I have therefore used the present tense throughout. Moreover, even in the areas which have been subjected to a considerable degree of contact many features described in this section—for instance, the kinship system—still remain unchanged. Active contact is also kept up between the coastal districts and the interior, and visits are always being exchanged, so that this Past is not only the living present for many, but even in the areas where the culture has been modified everyone is very well aware of what it once was. One of my best informants had been a sort of professional murderer until he accepted Christianity as recently as twenty-five years before.

PART I  
THE PAST

“And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city  
of David his father ; and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.”

*I Kings xi, 43.*

## CHAPTER I

### SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

In the primitive communities of the western Pacific the ties of kinship represent by far the most important single factor in the social structure. There is no recognized supreme authority over even a small territorial group, and customary obligation is a matter not of obedience to political authority but entirely of duties to kindred; hence in any study of these communities an analysis along kinship lines must be a starting point.

#### SOCIAL GROUPING

The principal social unit of north Malaita is the district group including anything from thirty to about eighty members. I have mentioned that the people do not live in villages but in isolated homesteads. Mountain ridges and streams, however, serve to divide the country into small districts, varying in size from a square mile or less to two or three. The residents of each of these areas are marked off from the rest of the community in a variety of ways. Thus they combine under their own leader to carry out all sorts of communal work, such as clearing land for new gardens and avenging wrongs committed by outsiders, take a pride in their local traditions, and refer to themselves by the name of the territory they occupy. My house, for example, was situated in a district known as Uala, and I found myself classed as "one of the Uala people". The residents of Ombo, which lay on the far side of a rivulet to the south, were in the same way spoken of as "the Ombo group" or simply as "the Ombo".

Groupings of this type are in some respects similar to localized clans, so common elsewhere in Melanesia. A clan, however, is by definition unilateral, since the members trace their descent from a common ancestor through either males or females, but not both. Clans, again, are always exogamous,

marriage with a person of the same group being strictly forbidden.<sup>1</sup> The members of a Malaita district group, on the other hand, though able to trace their descent from a common ancestor, regard ties through males and ties through females as of equal importance, and feel no repugnance at marriage amongst themselves. A person is, indeed, allowed to marry anyone except his first cousins and, of course, those within the immediate family circle. In rather more than two-thirds of the unions, nevertheless, the partners do come from different districts, and when this is so the sons have the right to erect their dwellings and make gardens in the territories of either of their parents. This right is even extended, and a person may go and live in any of the areas where an ancestor has dwelt—an ancestor, that is, from whom he is descended directly through males or through males and females.

The natives themselves express this right not in terms of where the ancestor dwelt but of where he is buried and worshipped. In each district there is a couple of sacred groves, always easy to locate because the bush in the vicinity is never cut down, and in consequence huge ficus and banyan trees tower over the surrounding jungle. At death the person's body is buried in one of the sacred groves of the area where his house was situated, and his descendants offer up sacrifices at intervals near the grave. Since the number of ancestors increases with every receding generation, and as marriages outside the district are of frequent occurrence, it follows that a person who wishes to worship all his forbears has to make sacrifices in many different places, and that in each one of these he has the right of residence. In practice he usually restricts the number to those whose graves are within a convenient distance, and the choice of districts to which he may belong is narrowed down considerably.

I have spoken only of men, for women always go to live with their husbands. The duty of providing the home falls to the man, who naturally prefers his own kinsmen for neighbours. In any case, he could only live with his wife's relatives if he was descended from the same ancestors. The natives themselves are in the habit of classing a woman with either the group of her husband or of her father, according

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the definition given in the standard work, *Notes and Queries in Anthropology*, publication of the Royal Anthropological Institute, London, 1929, p. 55.

PLATE III



A MEN'S HOUSE

*Jacme p. 36*



to the convenience of the moment. I have heard a company of women married to Omiba men referred to as "that Omiba crowd", and then one of them singled out, from her place of birth, as "that Uala person there".

Despite the stress laid on the men's freedom of movement, most of them prefer to go on living where they have been reared, and not more than about one in ten changes over to a new place. The majority, that is to say, continue in the district group of their birth, and at marriage either make a home in their father's homestead or begin one for themselves a few hundred yards away, where they bring up their families. The daughters go as brides to live elsewhere, but the sons remain to rear families in their turn, still in the same place. Change of residence occurs as a rule only when there is ill-feeling as the result of a quarrel, or if luck has been consistently bad, or if a man's immediate paternal kinsmen have died and he wishes perhaps to join forces with his mother's relatives.

It will now be clear that, if pedigrees are traced back to a sufficiently remote period, all the members of a district group will have at least one ancestor in common. To take the example of Uala, there are at present five main branches. Two of these go back to a brother and sister who lived three generations ago, and if we push back three generations more we find that they share an ancestor with yet a third branch. The remaining two branches are linked in an identical manner at the same period, and all are finally united three generations earlier still. The elders can enumerate their forbears through thirteen generations more, making twenty-six in all.

Thus we see that all the persons in a district are related. The majority, for reasons I have indicated, count relationship to one another only through males : of the five main branches of Uala only one traces its descent from a woman—and this proportion is typical. Members of this branch, however, are in no way at a disadvantage in their dealings with the rest, and it is recognized that their claim to live in the district is perfectly valid.

Each individual is also related through his progenitors to the persons living in all the places where he has the potential right of residence. The natives are excellent genealogists and, as well as remembering the names of their ancestors, can trace out every step of these relationships. Nowadays a few who have learnt to write keep records of their kin, and

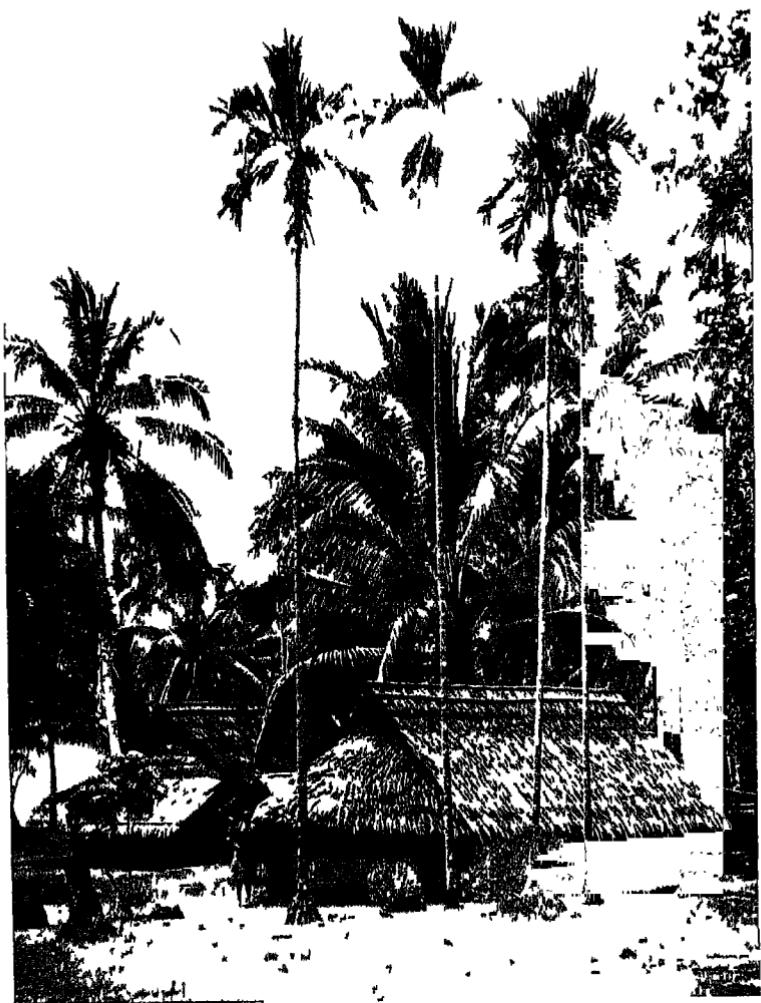
one informant asked me to teach him my way of writing down genealogies.

According to native standards relatives should always be prepared to assist one another in time of need, and informants were at pains to point out the host of persons on whom any single individual can depend—upwards of 200 is by no means uncommon. In practice, of course, there is no single task which demands the presence of so many, nor is anyone expected to help such a multitude as part of the daily routine. The only persons who can regularly assist one another are those who live in the same neighbourhood, and it is for this reason that the district is the principal co-operating unit.

I was surprised to find that the natives have no word for this group. They look upon it as accidental and say that the important body is the one which includes all a person's relatives. This they call his *ina-la*, his kin. He co-operates with those who live close by for convenience : he ought to co-operate with them all. In point of fact, however, constant association strengthens the blood tie : any help a person gives has to be returned in kind, and if a man is assisted ten times more often by his relatives from the same district as himself than by his other kinsmen he is naturally drawn to them far more. These loyalties are fostered by local traditions, with the result that the boundaries between districts tend also to become social barriers. A Malaita district may not be a closed corporation like a clan, but when it is considered as a working unit the differences between the two types of grouping are slight.

Curiously enough there is a word for the persons to whom an individual is related through males, *ainifasia* (from *ai* = a tree and *fasi* = to plant : the literal meaning of the word is a planted tree, that is one grown with human care in contrast with a forest tree). The children of the womenfolk of this group are called *ngwaikwalina*, and their children, again, *mburi*. These are likened to the branches and twigs respectively of the parent tree, which fact indicates that the natives are predominantly patrilineal in sentiment. In several areas one finds *ainifasia* only, but as in others there are also a number of *ngwaikwalina* and *mburi*, this term cannot be used for the district group. In some cases, too, a person's *ainifasia* belong to a different district from himself. The word *kwalafa* (from *kwala* = to bear children) must also be

PLATE IV



WOMEN'S HOUSES.



mentioned. This is used quite as loosely as our term family, by which sometimes we mean only parents and children—the family according to strict anthropological definition—sometimes all the persons with the same surname, and sometimes all a person's blood relatives. I have known *kvalafa* to be employed as a substitute for *ainifasia*, for district and for *ina-la*.<sup>1</sup>

#### 'THE SYSTEM OF RELATIONSHIP

As in other primitive communities throughout the world, these natives apply each of their kinship terms not to a single individual but to several. Thus all male collaterals of the generation senior to the speaker, such as the sons of the paternal grandfather and the father's father's son's sons, are referred to by the same term as the father, and the female collaterals similarly are spoken of by the word for mother. The children of all these persons are likewise referred to as brothers and sisters, and there is also one term for the women whom the father calls sisters and the men whom the mother calls brothers. It will be necessary to discuss the process by which the child learns to apply these terms within the circle of his acquaintance and to distinguish the members of his immediate family from those classified with them. In order to do this I shall trace out a typical life history from birth through puberty to marriage, parenthood, and death.

A close personal relation exists from the beginning between an infant and its parents, but from the fourth month onwards it comes in contact with several other persons. It soon becomes friendly with those it sees most often and makes no objection when they take it in their arms. It always sleeps with its mother, however, and as she alone suckles it, it is far more at ease by her side. The first words learnt are the terms for mother and father, and these are applied not only to the real parents but also to the other persons whom the child knows. At this early age a baby cannot realize, of course, that a specific relationship is implied: that comes later. The terms acquire their true significance within the family, for though other persons may share some of the

<sup>1</sup> This information supersedes that given in my "Report on Field Work in Guadalcanal and Malaita," *Oceania*, vol. iv, pp. 233-267. The report was written in haste without adequate consultation of my notebooks, and certain statements I now find were inaccurate.

## THE PAST

responsibilities for the child's upbringing, the main obligation rests on the parents, and they are its most constant companions. At the same time, little difference is to be observed between its behaviour towards its parents and towards these others. It looks to all the women, for example, to provide protection and food, and it obeys all the men. Constant association with the parents, nevertheless, means that the real mother is asked for protection and food most frequently, and the father's orders most often carried out. Greater familiarity with the parents, and their continued care and interest, also lead to a marked preference for their company.

As the child grows older and its horizon widens it is instructed to extend the kinship terms with which it is familiar to persons it now meets for the first time. Encouragement is given also for it to treat them in the appropriate manner. Thus maternal tenderness is displayed by the women called mother in the expectation that they in return will be shown filial devotion. Behaviour considered proper between a son and his real father has also to be carried over to the men classed with him, and so forth. But just as the child differentiated his parents from the other persons whom he knew in infancy, so he now draws a distinction between his close and his more distant kin. He may treat a man to whom he is remotely related as, say, a father, when they meet, but persons linked by weak blood ties have as a rule so few opportunities for social intercourse that they can never play an important part in one another's affairs. Thus although the kinship system may serve to group relatives into an ordered scheme and regulate behaviour towards them, there is also room for individual variations.<sup>1</sup>

## BIRTH AND EARLY CHILDHOOD

The natives of Malaita regard a newly born infant and its mother as ritually unclean, and a few weeks before she

<sup>1</sup> I must emphasize again that the following account is a mere outline : a great many points referred to incidentally will be developed when at a later date I publish my material in full. Readers interested in the subject of kinship in a general way should consult B. Malinowski, *Sexual Life of Savages*, London, 1929 ; B. Malinowski, s.v. "Kinship", *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th edition ; B. Malinowski, "Parenthood as the Basis of Social Structure," *The New Generation* (ed. S. D. Calverton and V. F. Schmalhausen), New York, 1930 ; and R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, London, 1937, p. 274 *et passim*.

PLATE V



SOEMOMOLE, WIFE OF THE MISSION TEACHER AKWA, SUCKLING HER OWN CHILD AND AN ORPHAN.



expects to be delivered the woman therefore builds a small hut in the bush. Food supplies and firewood are also set aside, for she will have to remain entirely alone for three months. When labour begins she hurries off to this little hut, and the child is born without even the assistance of a mid-wife. Usually one or two of her husband's kinsfolk stand outside, and when delivery has taken place the mother informs them whether the infant is alive and what is its sex. She has to look after both it and herself, however, as best she can. She cuts the umbilical cord, buries the placenta, washes the child, and then makes herself some warm broth.

During the full period of seclusion the mother has no other care except the infant. She is not bothered by ordinary household work and family worries, and in consequence can devote her whole attention to it. This often saves its life, for, owing to the complete lack of hygiene, young children are liable to contract all sorts of ailments. Sometimes, however, both infant and mother succumb. Some writers have recorded that native women in the Pacific give birth with almost the ease of a beast of the field, but in my experience this is not so. A few women do, indeed, bear children easily, but labour is often prolonged, and the maternal mortality rate is very high. When a young mother does die the father asks some relative with a baby of her own to look after the infant (Plate V). It remains with this woman until it is weaned, after which she is given a substantial present to repay her kindness.

While the child is in the birth-hut its every want is attended to at once. A woman who let her baby cry would be regarded as cruel, and no sooner is its mouth opened than it is given the breast. It sleeps in the mother's arms by day, and at night she folds it to her side.

The return to the homestead is accomplished without much ceremony, but the husband makes a good deal of the child, whom he now sees for the first time. At first it does not appear to welcome his attentions, and for weeks it may scream for its mother every time he picks it up. It also objects when its other relatives nurse it during the formal visits they now make to congratulate the mother.

Apart from the parents the first persons to whom a child becomes accustomed are the father's mother and the mother's

sisters. The former lives as a rule either in the same homestead or else in one not far away, and she makes it a duty to come and nurse her grandchild for a short time every day. "It is right that an infant should soon know his grandmother," say the natives. Most old women appear to derive great joy from fondling their grandchildren and showing them off to visitors.

The mother's sisters live in different homesteads, but if these are not far away they always make frequent visits. "Sisters are one blood," I was told. "As children they had affection for one another and shared their secrets. That is why a woman has affection for her sister's babies."

The father's brother's wives live, if not in the same homestead, in the vicinity, but do not always at first take the same interest in the child. "They are not the mother's blood, and the child is not their own kin : he is their relative by marriage. Here in Malaita blood is the heavy [important] thing". These women are expected to come along and help the mother with her work, however, and, when the child is a little older, to nurse and play with him. If they are good friends they go gladly for the sake of company.

The father's sisters make an attempt to see the child as often as possible "because he is of their kin", but as in all probability their homesteads are some distance away their visits are not frequent. As we shall see, a certain amount of formality is also customary between siblings of opposite sex, and a woman takes less trouble over her brothers' children than over those of her sister.

Once the mother returns to the homestead she has to carry on with all her routine work once more. The garden has to be attended to—and by this time her weeding is probably very much behind unless her husband has other wives who have been looking after her plots during her absence—vegetables to be exchanged for fish at the markets where the saltwater folk bring their catch, housework to be done, waterbottles to be filled, and meals to be cooked. At first she takes the baby everywhere, supporting it on her hip in a sling made of bark cloth. Every day one is sure to see some mother busy in her garden with a sleeping baby on her hip shielded from the sun only by the shadow of her body (Plate VI). When he wakes and cries she pauses and suckles him. Husbands are usually most considerate and

PLATE VI



PLANTING CORN WHILE THE BABY SLEEPS.

PLATE VII



THE ELDEST GIRL IN THE FAMILY, AGED TWELVE, LOOKING AFTER HER YOUNGER SISTER AND THE BABY WHILE THE FATHER AND MOTHER ARE AWAY IN THE GARDEN. SHE IS SHOWING THE LITTLE GIRL HOW TO DRY PANDAN LEAVES SO THAT THEY CAN BE USED FOR WEAVING VATS.

only lose patience when they think the woman is neglecting her work unduly.

After a few months the child is considered old enough to be left in the homestead for a few hours while the mother does her work unencumbered. If the grandmother is an aged woman he is left with her, but if not there is generally some other dependent too decrepit for gardening. Old folk are always welcome for this reason; they may be an extra mouth to feed but more than repay their food by watching over the young children. Older unmarried girls also act as nurses, and in one family of my acquaintance a little girl, who could not have been more than twelve herself, spent her time looking after her youngest sister from the sixth month, another sister aged about four, and two other children, one a mere toddler (Plate VII).

The baby, who up till now has had his smallest whim indulged, at first weeps bitterly for his mother. The natives do not like to hear him cry, but think he is now "old enough to begin to learn". The nurse never slaps him yet but allows him to cry himself to sleep. In course of time he grows accustomed to doing without the breast, and after about nine months the mother can leave him for several hours, though her first task when she returns is to feed him. Meantime he is also given other foods, at first broth made from the tender flesh of a young coconut or a piece of taro already chewed by some older person. Later on more solid foods are added, until finally, by about the end of the second year, he is able to eat almost anything, except certain fish and other dishes held to be particularly indigestible. Nevertheless, he still continues to be suckled.

The word for mother in the To'ambaita dialect is *thainaka*. While they give the child the breast, fondle, and caress him, most mothers murmur "*nata*", the childish form of *thainaka*, corresponding with our own mummy for mother. Other women as they nurse the baby also say *nata* to him, and this is therefore the first word he utters. At first he has no idea of what the expression means, for he babbles "*nata*" not only to all these women but to his father as well. The relationship with the mother, however, is unique. Occasionally I have seen a woman who was nursing a child while the mother was busy attempt to keep him quiet with her breast, but in every instance he closed his lips tightly and turned his head

away. "He lets me nurse him," said one of them to me with a smile, "and he calls me *nata*, but he will have none of my breast. Always it is the same with children: many mothers but one breast only." I also noticed that sick children kept up a continual low whine if the mother passed them on to somebody else.

During babyhood the father has a minor rôle to fill. He may nurse and fondle the child for a short time each day, but looking after small infants is regarded as the job of the mother. I have even known some men who, rather than encumber themselves, preferred to do the weeding and cooking, normally women's work. Once children can say a few words, however, the father spends a good deal of his time playing with them. At first no distinction is made between boys and girls, but sooner or later sex becomes important. Men remain deeply interested in their daughters and all their doings but must inevitably see far more of their sons. The boys have to be introduced to the men's house, or *mbi'u* as it is called—which females are not allowed to enter—and taught men's work, but daughters learn women's work from their mothers.

Once a boy has been fed by his mother on her return from the garden the father carries him off to the stream for a bathe and then keeps him for company while doing his odd jobs, such as mending the pig sty, sharpening his axe or furnishing it with a new handle. As yet the child is not allowed to sleep in the *mbi'u* for fear lest he should cry for his mother in the night, but he is soon familiar with all the menfolk of the settlement and also with any regular visitors.

The next word learnt after *nata* is *mata*, the childish form of *maka*, father. This is used indiscriminately at first for all men, but again, because he is accustomed to him and has learnt to depend most upon him, every child prefers his own father's company.

The indiscriminate use of these two terms, except to grandparents, who are called *toto*, short for *koko'o*, is at first encouraged, but later on when the child realizes that everyone has a personal name he begins to use these. Throughout his lifetime, nevertheless, he prefers *maka* and *thainaka* for his parents and *koko'o* for his grandparents.

Native mothers do not as a rule employ a definite systematic technique of weaning, and infants are often given the breast

for a couple of years or more : I have even seen boys of four encouraged to suck when they were ill or had hurt themselves. The substitution of solid foods, combined with social expectation that the child no longer requires the breast, sometimes expressed in good-natured joking at his expense, is usually sufficient to make him give it up. Systematic weaning only becomes necessary if the mother is pregnant. About three months before the birth is expected she smears her nipples with the juice of a bitter vine or with nicotine from an old pipe, and the child is then revolted by the taste. Her main object is to make him independent so that he will not be inconsolable when she goes into retirement for the birth. The long separation at this time is also valuable in that it teaches him to do without her, and when he at last sees her fondling the new baby he is not as a rule jealous.

Once a child can walk and say a few words a determined effort is made to teach him personal cleanliness. Grave disapproval is shown should he make a mess near the house, and if this is insufficient to make him go into the bush he is whipped. He is also taught to respect property belonging to other people, and endeavours are made very early to impress upon him that generosity, especially with regard to food, must be shown on all occasions. He is told to share everything he is given, and if at first he is unwilling to do so a portion is taken from him and handed to anyone else who may be present. Food for visitors is also given to the child for presentation.

Instruction in these and other matters is given to boys for the most part by their father and to girls by their mother. When anything is done of which the elders disapprove they scold the child and say, "*Ambu ! Ambu !*" the local variant of the common Oceanic word *tapu*.

Now that the child can to some extent look after himself the other members of the settlement, who are normally close relatives of his father, encourage him to visit them. They take him in the first instance to their houses and give him titbits and dainties, telling him when he is hungry to come and ask for more. In this way he gets to know the other children, with whom he is soon perfectly content to play all day long while the adults are away at work. Homesteads, nevertheless, are very small, and a child is lucky if he has more than two or three playmates of approximately his own

age. Other settlements are too far away for small children to go on visits by themselves, and when they are a little older they are warned against doing so for fear of enemies, both human and supernatural.

By about the sixth year the parents begin to make an effort to encourage an interest in the garden. They take the children with them in the morning, and while the father shows the boys how to cut down trees, to clear away the bush, make fences and plant taro and other crops, the mother instructs her daughters in how to burn the rubbish, weed the plots, and dig (Plate IX). In mission areas the women nowadays plant taro, but amongst the heathens this is absolutely forbidden.

In the evening one may often hear a father telling the other men in the *mbi'u*, in the presence of the boy, how hard he has been working during the day. Their praise spurs him on to greater efforts, and some children actually win a reputation for themselves as good gardeners even before they reach puberty. Knowledge of their industry travels to other settlements, and parents use it as an example for their own children. Little girls are given plots of their own when they are about twelve years old, and occasionally as a special privilege allowed to cook their own taro or yams for the whole family. One sees them trudging along the roads late in the afternoon with loads which appear to be far too heavy for them to carry, but they themselves boast of the weight. Boys do not have plots until they are older, and it seemed to me that they did not work as hard as their sisters.

Until about the tenth year boys and girls play together, but from then onwards they begin to grow apart. One reason is that they are learning the techniques associated with their own sex and so have fewer common interests. Boys also no longer sleep in the same house as their sisters but are given a bed in the *mbi'u* and told in future to consider themselves men. Too much social intercourse with the opposite sex is believed to be injurious to health, and they are therefore expected to associate themselves with the men of the settlement and to have as little to do with girls as possible.

One might have expected, perhaps, from the indulgence of their infancy, that these Malaita children would be utterly spoiled; yet they are on the whole quite well behaved, and,

although parents never attempt specifically to make them obedient, most of them usually do what they are told. Except with regard to personal cleanliness, generosity, and respect for the property of other people, whippings are administered not so much with the idea of making the child mend its ways, nor to punish it for its own good, but rather because it has irritated its elders beyond endurance. The native father spanks a naughty child only when he has been personally inconvenienced, and I have often heard an adult say as he boxed a child's ears, "That pays you back." On one occasion I remember hearing a father shout as he hit his son for continuing to interfere with building material after being told repeatedly to go away, "You interrupt my work; I interrupt you." It is needless to add that the native would not in the least understand our expression, "This will hurt me far more than it will hurt you." Also he would never dream of sending a child supperless to bed; any attempt to do so would be bound to fail, for the boy would run to the house of some relative and ask for food there.

Perhaps the principal factor in securing respect for parental authority is the smallness of the homesteads. The children are never sufficient to form a little republic of their own where they can go and win approval when their parents are vexed or angry, and it is impossible for them to wander away to another settlement until the affair is forgotten, so that if a child does not do what he is told he has to remain in the atmosphere of disapproval which his conduct creates.<sup>1</sup> This is uncomfortable, and in consequence, even though no outside pressure is brought to bear on him, he takes care, unless he is a hardened sinner, not to disobey in future. He is thus dominated by the opinions of his elders the whole time.

The natives themselves are also inclined to stress affection as a reason for obedience. "A child is not one person alone; always he leans heavily upon the father and mother," said a neighbour of mine. "The mother suckles him and tends him, the father and mother feed him and shield him from harm. That is why children love the father and mother and listen to their talk [i.e. obey]. You saw my son when I went

<sup>1</sup> I have discussed the importance of the children's republic in another society in my paper "Education in Ontong Java", *American Anthropologist*, vol. xxxii, 1931, pp. 601-614. Cf. also B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, London, 1927, pp. 55-8, and M. Mead, *Growing Up in New Guinea*, New York, 1933.

to Rarasu [the man had been away on a journey]. You yourself told me he cried for me. You said he cried, cried all the time. That is why he hears me [obeys] when I speak."

The anthropologist, by force of circumstance, has to be content with the study of behaviour rather than feelings, but there is little doubt in my mind that these children do love their parents and have complete faith in them. I have seen little boys, who at first were terrified of my strange appearance, accept me with confidence from their father's arms. I am not convinced, nevertheless, that this affection in itself makes them obedient. The important point is rather the native view that filial devotion follows parental care.

#### LEARNING KINSHIP TERMS

By about the ninth year the child recognizes a large number of his relatives. The closest kinsfolk have been entertained in the homestead many times, and the parents have also carried him with them when they made return visits. The womenfolk take him on their knee and, if he is frightened, try to calm his fears by explaining that they also are his "mothers". "We are your kin, your *thainaka*," they tell him. "You have *thainaka* here: *thainaka* in your own home and *thainaka* here, they are the same. Do not be afraid. Your *thainaka* will look after you." They themselves call the child *ngwela*, the word used by the parents for son and daughter. The real mother also tells him not to be afraid and that these women will shield him from harm, play with him, and give him food when he is hungry.

Much the same tactics are used later on when an older child meets a relative whom he does not know. The adult tries to overcome his shyness by calling him *ngwela*, giving him dainties, and playing with him, while the parents also encourage him by telling him that the man is a *maka*. "He is your *maka*; he is the same as I am," the father will say. "Your *maka* will look after you and protect you, and he will give you food to eat." Once friendly relations have been established the boy will also be reminded, "Because he is your *maka* you must obey him."

The household of my friend and near neighbour Maekali provided several instances of how kinship terms are taught. On one occasion a relative came from some distance on an

errand and was asked to remain for the evening meal. The small son of the house, Tau'a, aged two and a half, was not unfriendly till the visitor began to eat with Mackali's spoon, when he began to scream, "My father's spoon, my father's spoon." Mackali explained that the visitor was also a *maka*, but the child said, "No, you are my *maka*," and put his arms around his father's neck and began to cry. They tried to pacify him by every means but continued to insist that the man was indeed a *maka*. When he himself offered to surrender the spoon Maekali said no, the child must learn. Subsequently the man made another visit specially to give the boy a present, and afterwards when they met I noticed that Tau'a always gave him a pleasant smile and called him *maka*.

This same child was at first very much afraid of me. The photograph reproduced in Plate VIII shows him seeking protection from his father when I pointed the camera at him during the first week after my arrival. His parents tried to explain that I would do him no harm, but he refused to listen. Then I began giving him biscuits, and it occurred to Maekali to tell him that I too was a *maka*. After this we were good friends, and he used to come and say, "*Maka* bisikit." Soon, however, his parents told him my name, and he then used his own version of that instead.

Once a boy is considered old enough to leave his father and mother, that is from about the sixth or seventh year, various relatives invite him to accompany them without his parents to their homestead for a few days. In this way he visits most of the settlements in his own district, as well as those outside which belong to close kinsmen, such as his mother's brothers. If at first he seems reluctant to go his parents are expected to do their best to urge and persuade him, even using force if need be. He may fret for them in the beginning, but as he becomes more accustomed to his hosts he accepts their invitations gladly in order to play with their children. The kinship terms for brother and sister (*ndo'ora* and *ngwaingwaina*) are not often used as terms of address by anyone, and almost never by the young, but the words are learnt, and the elders explain that the children of these other homesteads are "the same as brothers and sisters". Old persons the child is encouraged to call *koko'o*, the word he uses for his grandparents.

Soon afterwards, "when the child is old enough to hear what is said to him," it is explained that although *maka* and *thainaka* may be correctly used in addressing practically any older relative, in some cases these are not the correct terms of reference. A neighbour's child, aged about ten, had mastered this sufficiently well to tell me about it. "My father's brothers, they are my *maka* : my mother's sisters, they are my *thainaka* : my father's sisters and my mother's brothers, they are my *koko'o*"—the same word as the term for grandparent. This applies to not only the true siblings of the parents, but to all relatives of that generation. The children of the "true" *koko'o*—that is of the father's real sisters and of the mother's real brothers—are referred to as *ndi'i*, a term which is seldom extended to the children of "distant" *koko'o*.

At about this time—round about the tenth or eleventh year—the child is also taught that certain qualifying adjectives may be used when referring to relatives. Thus the real father is the "true" *maka*, and the real father's own brothers "second" *maka*. Similarly the mother is the "true" *thainaka* and her own sisters "second" *thainaka*. Other close kinsmen are distinguished as "near" relatives.

Then at a slightly later stage the child has demonstrated to him his exact relationship to everyone he is accustomed to meet. Thus if, for example, the father's father's brother's son is expected on a visit someone, will say, "Your *maka* so and so is coming. You call him *maka* because he is the same as your father's brother. Your father's father and this man's father had one mother ; they were true brothers." A boy aged eleven who used to accompany me when I went for walks would often point out a house and say, "So and so lives there. She is my *thainaka* ; not my 'true' mother, but that woman's mother and my mother's mother were 'true' sisters. I can go and take food from her house."

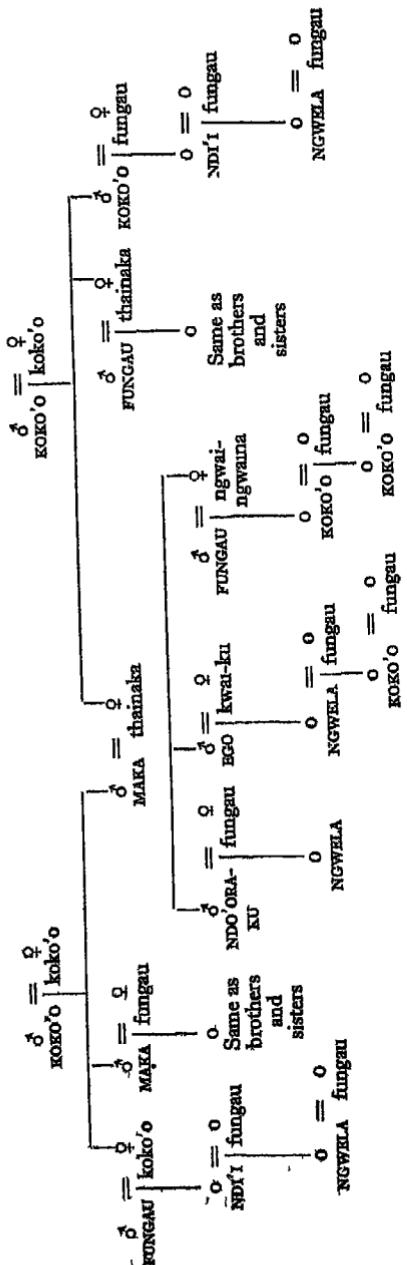
This fact, that he could take food, was always mentioned, and I observed that he often went in and asked for something to eat for us both. I have indicated that adults when introduced to young relatives always give them delicacies, and over and over again I have heard the remark, "I am your *maka* [or whatever the relationship was] ; here is food for you now. When you are hungry come to me for more."

Food is also explicitly referred to when a boy meets his

PLATE VIII



MAEKALI AND HIS SON, TAU'A



### KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

FIG. 1

$\delta$  = male,  $\varphi$  = female,  $o$  = male or female,  $xco$  = the speaker. Certain terms are given with the suffix *-ka*, a special possessive pronoun in the first person : these terms may not be used without the appropriate suffix. Other terms take the ordinary possessive pronouns.

*Nde'oro-ku* is used for sibling of the same sex as the speaker, *ngwaingwa* for sibling of the opposite sex. The term *thai-ka* means elder sibling of either sex, and *thai-ku* younger sibling of either sex. A woman calls her brother's child *koko'*.

more distant relatives. These persons are not in the habit of paying frequent visits after the manner of close kin, and as they assist one another only in really important undertakings their chief meeting place is the market. The father introduces the boy, briefly indicating the nature of the tie, and they speak to him in a friendly manner, call him by the appropriate kinship term, and tell him to come and ask them for food if ever he is hungry when in their part of the country.

Just as one speaks of the "true" brother, father, etc., of the "second" brother, and of the "near" brother, so one also distinguishes "distant" kin, employing a series of special prefixes for the purpose. Thus the word for brother is *ndo'ora*, and for a distant brother *ngwai-ndo'ora*.

The spouses of the child's blood kinsmen are in many cases also his blood relatives in their own right, but even when this is not so they are expected to treat him in a friendly manner. Personal names are used in addressing them, but if they are being considered in their affinal relationship they are spoken of as *fungau*. They themselves refer to the child as their *ngwela*.

In this account I have written almost entirely of boys, but the same holds good for girls, except that the mother rather than father introduces them to their kinsfolk and furnishes such explanations as are considered necessary.

Nothing has been said about polygynous households, very largely because there are not many of them. Each wife has a separate house to herself but is expected to be friendly with the rest. Sometimes, however, there is a certain amount of jealousy, and this, as might be expected, is passed on to the children. Half-brothers, in consequence, are not always the best of friends.

#### THE MEANING OF KINSHIP

The Malaita material confirms the view of Dr. Firth that the classificatory system is a mode of grouping people and establishing their relations with one another.<sup>1</sup> Each kinship term is used to denote a whole set of relatives, and from childhood a person is instructed that he must treat all those

<sup>1</sup> R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, op. cit., p. 235, and "Marriage and the Classificatory System of Relationship", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. lx, pp. 235-268.

classed together in a similar way. A formal scheme is thus provided as a basis for social intercourse and co-operation.

Yet it is to be noted that although superficially this behaviour may appear to be the same, underneath there is a certain amount of variation, depending upon such factors as the person's familiarity with the particular relatives in question. Everyone is more intimate with his own father, for example, than with the men similarly classified who live fifteen miles away. This is so far recognized that the classificatory system permits of the subdivision of each group of kin into four classes, spoken of respectively as the "true", the "second", the "near", and the "distant" relatives. The "true" relatives, taken as a whole, include the members of the individual family, together with one or two others, notably the father's sisters, the mother's brothers, and the grandparents. The real father is the "true" relative in the *maka* group, his own sisters in one of the *koko'o* groups, and so on. The most important of the "second" relatives are the real father's own brothers, who usually live in the same homestead, and the real mother's own sisters. "Near" relatives are for the most part confined to the members of the district groups of a person's parents, and all the rest are lumped together as "distant" kin.

A child owes the greater part of his upbringing to the members of his own family, though the persons living in the same homestead, of whom he becomes aware at practically the same moment, are of considerable importance. Kinship terms are always most strongly coloured, therefore, by their use in the family context, and a "true" relative, in consequence, forms a nucleus of each group of kin. It might be said that the mechanism for the explanation of wider kinship ties rests upon metaphors which stress analogies with family relationships, in that the terms a child is taught to apply to "near" and "distant" kin are those he has learnt to use for the members of his family.

#### PUBERTY TO MARRIAGE

We have now traced the life of a normal child from birth to the brink of puberty. During this period he has become familiar with most of his kinsmen and the rest he at least recognizes. Further, he knows the exact nature of the tie

uniting him to his close kin and has a rough idea of how he is linked to the remainder. So far, however, little more than devotion or cordiality has been demanded of him : our next task will be to find out how obligations are added to the privileges of kinship.

Puberty is not in Malaita marked by the performance of a series of ceremonies as is sometimes the case elsewhere, and there is no one point at which childhood may be said definitely to end. With the passing years, nevertheless, many changes take place in the boy's life.

At the age of about fourteen or fifteen, sure of a welcome everywhere, he begins to pay visits of his own accord to his different relatives. For reasons of safety he rarely travels alone, but it is usually easy to find a companion of his own age.

In every district there is always at least one person who by virtue of his wealth is entitled to be considered as a leader, and in his settlement a congregation of youths and young men is always to be found. They are attracted in the first instance by the abundance of food available, though in return for their meals they are expected to help their host in all sorts of ways. Leaders have far larger gardens than other people, and as these are in constant need of attention there is always some task for every newcomer. The young people also like to be together for the sake of company : in addition to carrying out their tasks they gossip, jost, and play games by day, and at night there is always some old man who can be persuaded to tell stories and recount the doings of the ancestors. Such tales lead to questions, and in this way the boy learns the history of his people. He also memorizes the names of his forbears and acquires a more thorough knowledge of the way in which he is related to the various members of his kin.

In this settlement the youth gains his first knowledge of weapons. The young folk often engage in mock battles while the older men stand by and instruct them, urging them on to greater and greater efforts, until finally someone receives a flesh wound. He hears talk, too, of the honour—or "name" as they say in the native language—of his district, and how it has been exalted (*fa'a-mbaita*, literally made big) by the bloody deeds of those who are now regarded as famous warriors. This impresses upon him that he must also be

jealous of all insults offered to his kinsmen and ready to fight for them when called upon. If an expedition does set out to kill an enemy he will be asked to join in as soon as he is sufficiently proficient with his club and bow and arrows, certainly by the time he is eighteen. It is said that in the past no woman would marry a man who had not shed blood and that the ancestors would be angry with him; such a person, in addition, was not eligible for the office of priest. Everyone had shed blood, however, by the time he was twenty-five.

During this period youths learn to dance and perhaps also to perform on the panpipes and take their place in dance orchestras (Plate XIII). (Women do not take part in Malaita dances, though they always attend and watch the performance.) Once they are proficient the young men like to be present at all the festivals held in the vicinity. These are associated with the offering of sacrifices to the ancestors—one person holds himself responsible for the main ceremony, but others descended from the same ancestors also attend, thereby securing any supernatural benefits they may be prepared to give. Persons who are not descended from the ancestors to whom offerings are being made, and who are unrelated to the man responsible for the ceremony, are supposed to keep away. Dances serve therefore as a gathering place for groups of kinsfolk.

Young men become so fond of dancing that their elders have to impress upon them that they must not attend festivals held in honour of other people's ancestors. A favourite proverb used in this connection is, "In flood-time the fish swim into the forest," the idea being that just as the fish are liable to be stranded on dry land when the floodwaters recede, so a man runs into danger by visiting a place where he has no relatives. No one will give him food, and enemies, not necessarily of himself but of one of his kinsmen, may seize the chance to settle an old feud and kill him.

Dances and sacrifices give opportunities for religious instruction, and the youth in this way learns of the beliefs of his people. In addition the festivals, by providing concrete evidence of how the reputation and power of the man responsible are enhanced, serve also to stir his ambition.

By the time the youth has reached early manhood he clearly realizes that kinship makes greater claims upon him

than passive friendliness. He has to give, instead of merely accepting the attentions, protection, kindness, and gifts of others. Labour is in greatest demand, and he has to help his kinsfolk whenever they are pressed with work or have some heavy task in hand requiring general co-operation. Thus he is called out regularly to share in the work of clearing the ground for new gardens, fencing, and sometimes for planting, especially if this has been delayed beyond the due season by bad weather. Assistance is also given to persons who are building a new house, both in the collection of materials and the actual construction, and to those who are preparing to give a large feast. The heaviest labour in connection with the latter consists in carrying pigs, firewood, and other materials. Sometimes a demand may also be made to accompany a raiding expedition bent on exacting vengeance on some other group.

If a young man is at all backward in helping his kinsfolk they chide him with a reminder that they have given him food for many years while he was young and ask if all this kindness is to go unrequited. On making a request a man usually mentions the appropriate kinship term. "My brother," he will say, "I am cutting down trees to make posts for my new house to-morrow"; or, "My son, my garden needs many workers." I was told in explanation, "We call a man brother to make his belly sweet towards us; then he does not refuse what we ask." Reference to the kinship tie is a reminder that there is an obligation to fulfil.

Requests for assistance are not often ignored, and most young men spend a good deal of their time working in the settlements of their various relatives. They receive their food in return, and at the conclusion of particularly important operations a small feast is held, involving the killing of at least one pig. Every householder has a few of these animals, but as they are slaughtered only on occasions of this kind lazy persons never have pork to eat, a severe deprivation, since it is the only meat available. An oft quoted proverb runs: "The worker has the meat and the lazy one the bone."

Although so much help is given to other relatives the parents are not forgotten, and a young man still continues to spend much of his time with them. If he shows a tendency to wander off elsewhere too frequently he is told at once that his chief responsibilities lie at home. "Did your mother

suckle you and cleanse you for nothing?" I heard one father chide. "Did I not work to give you food when you were a child? Now you must return our labour." Such reminders are usually sufficient to bring him to his senses, but if not the parents do not hesitate to threaten him with disinheritance, though they actually do this very rarely, and I heard of only one or two examples. Thus although a young man is no longer directly dependent upon his family for the elementary necessities of food and shelter, since these can be obtained from other relatives, their control of material wealth provides a motive for continuing to please them.

Young girls do not leave home nearly as much as their brothers. They have gardens of their own while they are still in their early teens, and as these require constant attendance they are not able to wander off to other settlements to gossip and play. When male relatives are preparing a feast they may put in an appearance in order to help in bringing the food from the garden, but their absences are never protracted, and their mothers are always present as well doing their share. By about the nineteenth year some suitor has generally sought a girl's hand in marriage, and she then takes up residence in her husband's district. Visits are made to her parents and to her brothers and sisters, but with the passing of the years she becomes identified less and less with the group into which she was born and proportionately more and more with that into which she has married.

#### MARRIAGE CEREMONIES

Premarital chastity is enjoined for both sexes, and, judging from the rarity of scandals, it would appear that most of the young people have no sexual experience before marriage. "The act of intercourse arouses desire," I was told, "and if a youth does not have intercourse he will not want it"—a belief which is so strongly held that it apparently affects conduct. But as a safeguard parents always insist that their daughters shall be accompanied wherever they go, if only by a young child. Such a situation has in some other societies given rise to regularized homosexual practices, but in Malaita this is not so.

Courtship is permitted, but the chaperon is always present.

The traditional method of wooing is for the young man to stand behind the girl with his buttocks touching hers and to play her serenades on a bamboo instrument very like a Jew's harp, while the chaperon sits some yards away, careful never to let the couple out of sight. A man usually depends upon his sisters to make assignations for him, though they themselves have to take care to keep their own followers a secret.

Young men do not marry until a much later age than girls ; twenty-five or a little later is considered appropriate. The desire for sexual gratification is one motive for seeking a mate, but not by any means the most powerful. By this time a man wants to have a household of his own where he can be sure of getting his meals without putting himself under an obligation to others, and he also desires children and the prestige the married state carries with it. Again, if he is ambitious he wants to acquire wealth and a position in the community. These he cannot have without the co-operation of a wife, since certain tasks, such as weeding, digging the crops and cooking, are recognized as women's work.

Economic dependence, as I have already indicated, is a powerful sanction for obedience to authority, and nowhere is this more in evidence than with regard to marriage. When a young man takes a wife he has to hand over to her relatives a large number of valuables, consisting of ornaments (see Frontispiece and Plate XIV), such as combs, ear-sticks, arm- and leg-bands, shell breast-plates, necklaces, feathers and discs of clam-shell with plates of fretted turtle-shell attached to be worn on the forehead, together with strings about a fathom long of small red shell discs. These last, bound together in sets of ten, known as *tafuli'ae*, are obtained by trade from the natives of the other side of the island (Plate X). A young man cannot hope to accumulate sufficient valuables for this transaction by his own efforts, but has to depend upon his elders for help. He has not only to obtain their approval of his choice therefore, but for years beforehand has to be careful to preserve their good opinion. The relatively late age of marriage increases the importance of this institution as one of the forces upholding respect for traditional authority.

Men of importance usually prefer to select spouses for their sons, since they desire alliances with other powerful families, but in the case of ordinary persons the young man himself makes the first move. He goes to his parents, or if

they are dead to his guardians, and names the girl he wishes to marry. If there are no objections an attempt is made by roundabout methods to find out whether her father will accept him as a son-in-law. Should he seem to be agreeable the subject is broached openly, and a day fixed for the young man's kinsfolk to fetch her. They carry with them a couple of *tafuli'ae* to present to her father, a gift known as the *fa'ambua* (from *fa'a-ambuaa*, meaning, to cause to be set apart, because the girl is now "reserved" for the future husband, i.e. betrothed).

Two other presentations have to be made before the marriage is consummated, but for the time being the girl remains in the young man's settlement so that she can become accustomed to his kinsfolk and be instructed in her new duties by her mother-in-law. She is allowed to bring a companion, and her parents may even come to see her occasionally, since it is recognized that this is for her a period of strain. "She is lonely for her old companions, she misses her mother. She knows her mother-in-law will watch her all the time and find fault with her." After some months, when sufficient valuables have been collected for the second presentation, she is sent home to be taken back again formally as a bride.

The second presentation, known as *fofo'ea* (from *fofo'e* = to hang up), is made publicly in the presence of the kinsfolk of both the young people. The relatives of the young man set out in the morning and walk to the homestead of the bride's parents, where in the meantime her kinsmen have assembled. When everything is ready the father of the young man, or someone acting on his behalf, takes eight or ten *tafuli'ae* and hangs them up in front of the *mbi'u*. The men press forward and examine them, and after some minutes the girl's father takes them down and puts them away. Later on he will distribute them among her closer relatives.

As soon as the valuables have been put away the young man's mother moves off to the girl's mother's house and leads her forth to where the men are waiting. Her father steps forward, puts a fine new *tafuli'ae* around her neck as a gift for her husband, and then gives her a short lecture. She is leaving her parents now, he says, but must ever be careful of their good name. This she may do by showing her husband and his parents that she has been well brought up. She

must be industrious, obey them and be kind and helpful to all their relatives. He bids her good-bye and she is led away, usually with tears streaming down her cheeks. The two sets of relatives now exchange approximately equal quantities of food, which the respective parents distribute.

The third presentation takes place a few months later, this time in the settlement of the bridegroom's people. The bride's parents send word beforehand that on a certain day they intend to make a gift of food and pigs, usually not more than three. The groom's parents collect a small amount of food also and, in addition, *tafuli'ae* to approximately the value of the food they expect to receive. One thousand taro are worth one *tafuli'ae*, and there are also recognized equivalents, varying according to their size, with regard to pigs. The food is brought by a large party and laid out in the centre of the settlement for inspection. After a short interval these people are given the smaller quantity of food by the groom's relatives, and the *tafuli'ae* are handed over to the bride's parents. The couple are now regarded as legally married, and the husband does not long delay in building his wife a house.

This handing over of valuables has important social implications. In the first place, it serves as a convenient means for the discipline of unruly young men and ensuring their ultimate obedience to authority. Then it is a guarantee that the girl will be well treated by her husband, for if he were consistently cruel and she ran home to her parents they would still have the right to keep the *tafuli'ae* even if they refused to allow her to return. This would leave the husband in a most unfortunate position. "He is without a wife and without *tafuli'ae*. Who will help him now? His kinsmen have given *tafuli'ae* once: that is enough." The valuables are also a sort of premium to the girl's parents for bringing her up well, since if she is lazy or disobedient the husband can send her home and demand all the presents back. To prevent this her father therefore impresses upon her right up to the last moment that she must give no cause for fault-finding. Other factors no doubt are involved—notably the separate dwelling houses of the couple—but it is none the less significant that divorce is practically unknown.

Finally, participation in the public ceremonial by a wide circle of kindred emphasizes in a formal manner the importance

of the new relationship which is being created not only between the couple themselves but between each partner and the relatives of the other. I shall have more to say presently of the duties and obligations involved.

#### RELATIONS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE

The young couple spend a good deal of time together and work side by side in the gardens while the girl is living with her mother-in-law. Long before the marriage is finally sealed they outgrow any shyness they may have felt at first in one another's company and are able to settle down at once as soon as the wife's house is built. Only a small portion of their common life is spent here, however, for the garden is their chief meeting place. The husband usually takes a formal meal in the evening at his wife's fireside, but always sleeps in the *mbi'u*. Even when they have had sexual intercourse he leaves her before morning, for it is believed that the crops would wither and die at his approach if he remained all night. The natives maintain that this rule is never broken, and also state that sexual intercourse does not occur in daylight on account of the danger to the food supply.<sup>1</sup>

The chief desire of young married couples is independence, and their first task is to make a garden. The young man asks his relatives to help him, and an area of land is soon cleared. Relatives also give him sufficient taro shoots and yam tubers to plant a fair sized crop, but once a fence has been erected around the garden no one approaches except by invitation, and a man with a message to deliver to another will rather sit and wait for him in the *mbi'u* than follow him half a mile to his garden. There is no native proverb to that effect, but one might almost adapt our own and say with equal truth that a Malaitaman's garden is his castle. If the site chosen is close to a public path he begins by felling two or three saplings across it, thus closing it to traffic. A detour is then cut so that passers-by will always be out of earshot.

The young couple also begin to collect a herd of pigs at once. The man's parents, and sometimes the woman's

<sup>1</sup> Yet in Guadalcanal, where husband and wife sleep together all night under the same roof, sexual intercourse takes place not in the house but in the garden during the daytime.

brothers, present them with two or three small ones, which they tend and feed carefully.

The husband is the recognized head of the household, but the relation between him and his wife is normally one of mutual respect. There are, of course, couples who quarrel, and husbands who beat their wives, as well as wives who henpeck their husbands, but such cases are rare. The natives expressly state that with the passing of the years it is much more usual to find that the initial attraction of the couple for one another on more or less physical grounds has deepened into real affection.

"At first a youth thinks of his wife for copulation," said an old man to me once. "He looks at her strong limbs and her smooth skin and thinks they are good. He desires to lie with her. In the white man's country is it not the same? Skin colour is of no matter: young people have hot desires everywhere. But what of old married people? you ask. Yes, that is different. Copulation, it is still important, but now other matters concern them. To be married to a woman and grow old with her is a good thing. They work together, she gives the man advice, she cools him when he is angry, and yes, this is greatest, they look with the same eyes at their children. A married couple, they love and cherish one another. A man whose wife is dead, he is a lonely one."

The word I have translated as "love and cherish" is *lioithau* (from *ho* = the heart). It is used also for the feelings of parents and children, and occasionally, if they are very demonstrative, of brothers. But it is never employed for relations with other persons.

Husband and wife are united by their mutual dependence for food and other necessities. There is a sexual division of labour, and although each may help the other at busy periods, no man would do women's work all the time, nor could a woman do man's work. Day by day they labour at their different tasks for the same ends, provision of food to eat and the establishment of themselves in the community as persons of standing. Social status is dependent not upon birth and blood, but upon possession of wealth, which consists primarily of extensive gardens and large herds of pigs. Prestige is more important for the man, but his position reflects upon his wife, and her reputation is also enhanced.

The partners in marriage are also dependent upon one

another for the satisfaction of their sexual needs, since adultery is strongly disapproved of and rigorously punished, in the case of the man with the death penalty.

The man takes the more active part in any dealings a couple may have with the outside world, but in most matters he confides in his wife, who often has great influence on his conduct. This is taken so much for granted that if two men have quarrelled and one of them wishes the breach to be healed the accepted procedure is for his wife to visit the wife of the other man and urge her to soothe his ill-temper. It is said that only in the case of raiding expeditions must a husband keep his own counsel, since if he told his wife of what was intended she might inform her relatives and then news of the proposed expedition would become public. Again, since women are timorous, a wife might persuade her husband not to take part. I have definite evidence, however, that in some cases men have discussed every detail of intended raids with their womenfolk and even asked their advice.

The closeness of the relation between husband and wife is indicated also by another fact. All deaths are supposed to be caused by sorcery, and one might therefore have expected, since a woman is often not related by blood ties to her husband's kinsmen, that wives would frequently be suspected. Yet I heard of only one or two cases where women had been accused of bewitching their husbands ; and in each of these the couples had been well known for their quarrels.

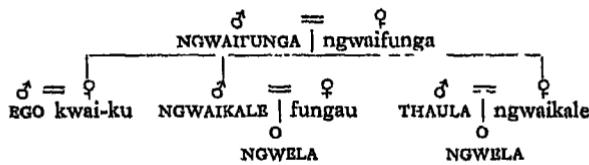
The word for spouse is *kwai*, but in addressing one another husband and wife use personal names.

#### AFFINAL RELATIVES

By the act of marriage a man also links himself with the members of his wife's immediate family. They are supposed to be the best of friends and to help one another in every way possible. "Parents-in-law are the same as a 'second' father and a 'second' mother, and they regard their son-in-law like a 'second' son." Special kinship terms are used, however ; *ngwafunga* for parents-in-law and *fungau* for son-(or daughter-) in-law. In practice these persons are usually friendly enough, but relations are sometimes strained, especially if the girl's parents are not close blood relatives.

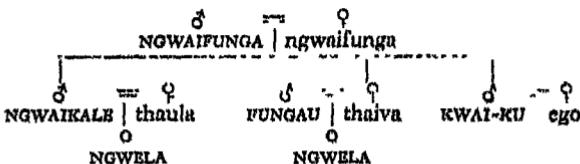
but live somewhere in the vicinity of the home of the young couple.

The young man normally feels a certain shyness in the presence of his parents-in-law. "Marriage makes him feel small [*fa'a-faekwa*]," it was explained. "He is under an obligation to the father and mother of his wife, he owes them something. He has stolen their child. True, he gave *tafuli'ae* in return, but he always feels humble." Thus he tends to feel uncomfortable in their presence. Again, when they live close by they are apt to be on the watch to see that the girl



KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

FIG. 2



KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

FIG. 3

is not ill-treated, and are also prone to imagine that he does not help them as much as he might. On the other hand, the young man, who already has many obligations to his own kin, considers that they have no right to expect as much as they do. Our jokes about the mother-in-law I found were often appreciated.

Relations are apt to be most harmonious when a man marries a girl to whom he is already closely related, or when the girl is not a blood relative at all and her parents live at a distance. In the first case the relevant fact is that the parties are so accustomed to the mutual behaviour of blood kin

that the convention demanding inferiority and shyness has no weight. "The parents-in-law are already blood kin; therefore the man does not feel small when he marries. He cannot suddenly change." The new tie only serves to draw them closer together, and he helps them more frequently than he did before, and they help him because he now has a double claim on their benevolence.

In the other case, when the girl comes from a distance, relations remain on a friendly basis because her parents live so far away that they can never interfere in the young man's household. They send a formal summons for his assistance when they are concerned in some very important undertaking, such as a festival, but in more ordinary tasks this would be too inconvenient. Visits are regularly exchanged, in many instances for periods of up to about a week, but at infrequent intervals, since neither party can often afford to be away for so long. On such occasions choice bunches of bananas and extra large taro are always brought as gifts.

The wife's brothers and sisters have also to be taken into consideration. They are referred to as *ngwaikale* and speak of their brother-in-law as *fungau*, though in addressing one another personal names are the rule. After the parents, a woman's brother is her natural guardian, and in consequence the husband is said to feel inferior in his presence also. Since the two men are of the same generation the brother is allowed to take advantage of this and to make jokes at the expense of his sister's husband, who is supposed to stifle the resentment he may feel. They see something of one another when the brother-in-law visits his sister and when she in turn, accompanied by her husband, visits him. They assist one another also in a rather formal sort of way when feasts are prepared, but friendship is usually lacking unless they already had a high regard for one another before the marriage took place.

Relations with the wife's sisters are usually more amicable. Sisters are in the habit of exchanging visits as often as possible, and since they are normally accompanied by their husbands a firm friendship may also develop between the menfolk. There is a special term of reference for the husbands of two sisters, *thaula*, but definite obligations are not prescribed. I know of several instances, nevertheless, where a man and his wife's sister's husband became so attached to

one another that they made a garden together in order to carry on social intercourse more easily.

*Fungau*, as a term of reference, is used reciprocally by a man and his wife's brother's wife. They are expected to show respect for one another and to be mutually helpful.

A woman at marriage also links herself with her husband's family. His parents she is expected to treat as substitutes for her own; behaviour they reciprocate by acting as if she were their daughter. At first, however, she has rather a difficult time, since she is a stranger in the settlement and has no one to sympathize with her when her mother-in-law reprimands her. If the elder woman is a busybody and interfering by nature, or if the girl is at all lazy, a permanent state of tension may be created, and the husband has to make a new settlement for the sake of peace. But usually the two women adjust themselves to one another, especially after the birth of children. The terms used for parents- and daughter-in-law, as in the case of the man, are *ngwaifunga* and *fungau*.

The husband's brothers and their wives generally live in the homestead where the couple settle, and the woman in consequence is often in their company. The men she refers to as her *ngwaikale*, and the women as her *thaula*. The latter term is reciprocal, but the men call her *fungau*. In most cases they are all very good friends, and in some homesteads the women do a great deal of their cooking together. Where strain exists the cause is to be found in children's quarrels; the adults have interfered and taken sides, and distrust and suspicion have been the result.

The husband's sister, of course, lives elsewhere. She and her sister-in-law get along together well enough when they meet, and ill-feeling is only engendered if she interferes in the household arrangements, as she may do if she considers her brother's wife inefficient or a bad manager. These two women refer to one another as *thaifa*. The husband's sister's husband is spoken of as *fungau*, a term which on this occasion is used reciprocally.

It is important to note that the terms for relatives-by-marriage which have been discussed in this section are not extended after the manner of those applied to blood kindred. A person's *ngwaifunga* are his wife's parents only, not their brothers and sisters—unless they have acted as her foster

PLATE IX



A MOTHER TEACHING HER DAUGHTER HOW TO PLANT TARO SHOOTS

[Facing p. 30]



parents. Similarly the *ngwaikale* are the true siblings of the spouse, not the multitude of persons classified with them.

The blood kin of the consort, that is the members of his district group and all his other relatives, are referred to collectively as the *luma'aa*. Persons married to one's own blood relatives, on the other hand, are spoken of as *fungau*, the term which is also used for the wife's brother's wife and the husband's sister's husband.

A man is under a specific obligation to be helpful to those of his relatives-in-law to whom he applies precise kinship terms. This is supposed to be carried over to the whole of the *luma'aa*, but in practice such assistance as he gives is inspired by a different motive. When a woman helps a kinsman who is giving a feast, for example, her husband lends a hand not so much because he wishes to honour his obligation to his *luma'aa*, but because he desires to accompany his wife. Similarly, when a man helps a relative to build a new house his wife will assist in the preparation of the food for the workers (Plate XI) not primarily because the person building the house is one of her *luma'aa*, but because her husband has told her to come with him.

The *luma'aa* also help their *fungau*, but incidentally only : their assistance is given rather to their blood kin, the spouse of the *fungau*.

*Luma'aa* and *fungau* do have one definite responsibility, however ; namely to refrain from engaging in any raids directed against one another. If a man's blood kindred wished to murder one of his wife's relatives it would thus be useless for them to ask him to accompany them : indeed, they would probably keep their plans a secret for fear that he might tell his wife, with the object of giving the victim warning.

#### RECIPROCITY AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Reference has been made several times to the assistance relatives give one another in all big undertakings, such as gardening, house-building, feasts, and feuds. In everyday life gardening is the most important by far ; cultivation has to go on all the time, whereas houses last for several years, feasts take place only occasionally, and raids on other communities are not frequent. The areas under crops are

also extensive, much more so than is customary elsewhere, owing to the necessity of producing a surplus for exchange with the saltwater people.

A man does not realize to the full his vital need for this assistance until he is married and has gardens of his own. The work of clearing the ground and fencing is to-day heavy enough, but when stone tools alone were available it must have been arduous in the extreme. Planting the crop is also by no means an easy task, for the only implement is a stick with a sharpened point (Plate IX). It is possible, certainly, for the man to do all this by himself, but the work is twice as easy and far pleasanter when performed by a group.

Up till marriage he will have given his labour more or less freely. True, he received his education and food in return, and in his early twenties the need for contributions to his bride-price was a strong incentive. But no one seriously objected if he kept occasional holiday, so long as he was not consistently lazy. Now he finds that he is bound to his kinsfolk by a series of mutual obligations from which it is practically impossible to escape. He has to help them to ensure that they will be willing to give him their aid when he has need of it.

The fact that people have been taught from childhood to treat all their kin as if they were members of the family tends to make them look upon lazy individuals at first with a somewhat lenient eye, but ultimately the limit of patience is reached. "*Oke tharea sulathamindi*," says a proverb, "*osi thatharea kakare*"—Give to *sulathamindi*, but be most unwilling to give to *kakare*. These are two creepers which grow up the trunks of forest trees, but whereas *sulathamindi* dies with its host, *kakare* lives on. The implication is therefore, "Help those who will rally round you in time of need, and avoid those who take no notice of you."

A person who does shirk his duties always suffers sooner or later: I recall one man who had to live in a miserable hovel with a leaky roof because no one helped him when his old house fell into disrepair, and in consequence he had to manage as best he could alone. He had always made excuses when other people had a house to build, and they retaliated by refusing to co-operate. Then there were two or three individuals who had very small gardens because they had to

cultivate them unaided owing to past laziness in helping others. The gardens were more or less adequate for the provision of food for their families, but they themselves were looked upon by the rest of the community as, to use their phrase, *fu thakothako*. The *fu* is the seed of the Barringtonia tree, which grows along the beach, and *thakothako* is the intensive form of *thako*, to float. A *fu thakothako* then is a permanently floating seed, something without roots and, ultimately, rubbish. Such persons are particularly liable to be suspected of sorcery and killed.

The contempt in which these lazy persons are held itself ensures that there will not be many of them. The normal person is acutely sensitive about his reputation and the good opinion of his fellows, and the slighting references continually made about those who disregard their duties and obligations is a constant warning to others. On the other hand, those who are particularly generous with help receive the reward of public approval and enhanced reputation. When I asked one of my friends why he was going to cut timber for a very distant relative he replied, " You have lived with us and heard us talking. You know how we are always speaking about our reputation. It is a weighty thing amongst us here to have people say, ' He is a good man, he is always helping his relatives.' That is reputation. You know that I have a reputation, and people must have pointed me out to you as a man who looks after his kinsmen. That is why my name is like an eagle, high up above other men." He was generally respected, certainly, but he was hardly looked up to as much as he would have liked me to believe. In this connection it is significant that generosity is practically the only virtue consciously inculcated in the home.

The natives themselves say that, in addition, obligations must be fulfilled for the sake of the group as a whole. Neglected duties are supposed to lead to quarrels, and a district which is divided in this manner is open to attack by others. Every death is attributed to sorcery and is if possible followed by the slaying of the person suspected, in most cases an outsider. It is thought therefore that a sorcerer is unwilling to run the risk of bewitching members of united groups, and hence that they are comparatively safe.

The danger of " dividing the group " is also given as a reason why the members should respect one another's rights,

and the same point is again stressed if a quarrel actually occurs. Such a case is quoted on page 79. I have even heard the plea advanced that for the sake of general harmony one ought to put up with infringement of one's rights rather than retaliate.

#### MATURITY AND AGE

The typical individual whose life history we are tracing has now reached the age of about twenty-six and become an active member of his district group, with everything that implies. Soon his wife begins to bear him children, to whom he has the same responsibilities as his father had to him. The men he calls brother also found families, and to these again his behaviour has to be modelled on that of the older generation.

Then, as the years pass, his parents have also to be numbered among his dependants. Far from being able to provide him with food, they now have to ask him for sustenance. In this way he discharges his debt to them for their care during his own childhood.

When his children are in their early teens he moves away from the old homestead, if he has not done so before, and begins one for himself. The chief reason given for this is, again, "to prevent the division of the group by quarrels." If too many people live together it is said that they always squabble. "We separate to remain united," I was told.

In course of time the children grow up and marry, and the man becomes a grandfather, himself dependant upon his offspring. Yet garden work is not given up until the end, and one often sees old people scarcely able to walk who still spend an occasional hour digging or tending the crops of their children. It is as if they felt that life itself will go on so long as they can work, and I have even known persons who were obviously on their death-beds rise and be assisted along the road to the cultivations so that they might bid their gardens a last farewell.

But when death comes at last it is not the end. The spirit lives on and continues to act in a paternal manner towards the descendants, causing them to prosper if they are obedient and energetic, but scolding them if they are lazy or behave wrongly.

PLATE X



A TAFULI'AE



## CHAPTER II

### ECONOMICS AND LEADERSHIP

Possession of wealth in the Solomon Islands, as amongst ourselves, ensures prestige. But in a native community the same scale of comforts—or lack of them—is available for all ; everyone has to spend several hours of the day at the same kind of work, all eat the same dishes prepared in the same type of utensils from similar raw foods, and all sleep on the same kind of mats for beds. Wealth cannot be used therefore directly for the benefit of the possessor. The house of a wealthy man may be larger it is true and better built than that of one who is insignificant, and he may have several wives, but the difference otherwise is negligible. Reputation accordingly is enhanced not by accumulating possessions in order to use them one's self, but by giving them away. Every event of importance in a person's life, such as the death of his parents, or the marriage of his children, or the offering of a sacrifice to the ancestors, is celebrated by a feast. The more feasts a man gives, and the more lavish he is in the provision of food, the greater is his prestige.<sup>1</sup>

Wealth in Malaita consists mainly of food—pigs, vegetables (primarily taro and yams), fruit (chiefly bananas), and nuts (especially *Canarium* almonds, areca nuts, and coconuts). In addition, strings of shell discs and porpoise and dogs' teeth are also highly valued. The teeth are sometimes worn as ornaments but not the discs.

These discs, known to Europeans as "shell money" though they do not serve the same purpose as coin amongst ourselves, are manufactured by the natives of the Langalanga lagoon, on the western coast of Malaita. Three kinds of shell are used, a white mollusc, a black mussel, and, most important, the red-lipped *Spondylus*, which varies in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. L. P. Mair, "The Growth of Economic Individualism in African Society," *Journal of the African Society*, 1934, pp. 261-273.

To the native community, of course, even minor differences may be significant, and the owner of a large house may be on that account a great deal more important than the owner of a small one,

colour from brick-red to raspberry-pink. The shell is broken into pieces of approximately the required size, stuck into slabs of wood with thick paste and ground smooth. Next a hole is bored through the middle, and the pieces are then rounded off and polished at the edges. In this last process they have to be threaded on fibre strings which are pulled backwards and forwards along a groove in a sandstone block. Each disc is then carefully examined, and those that pass the test are strung on tough pandanus cords from six to eight feet long which are then made up into sets of from four to twenty (Plate X).

The Langalanga natives make voyages all over the central Solomons with their sets of discs, exchanging them for vegetables and pigs. Each set has a recognized value, though the various communities visited have special preferences with regard to size and colour. In north Malaita the unit is a set of ten strings, the *tafuli'ae*, already referred to in connection with bride-price. A large pig is valued at two *tafuli'ae*.

Prestige acquired by giving away wealth is of the utmost importance, since those who are looked up to most become the leaders of the community.<sup>1</sup> Leadership in the Solomons, however, is exercised in a very different way from that which is commonly associated with a native chief. Indeed, when discussing authority in north Malaita it is probably unwise to speak of chiefs at all. There is no recognized supreme ruler over even a small territorial group, and the individuals who command the respect of their fellows have no permanent legal claims to obedience but rather obtain by the distribution of their wealth the co-operation necessary for the enterprises they initiate. No one ever holds sway over more than at a maximum 200 followers, and although the heir to an old leader has an initial advantage over possible rivals, any ambitious young man can supplant him if he works hard, distributes sufficient wealth, and wins the respect and approval of his relatives through superior personal qualifications. To avoid misconceptions I shall call these leaders by the native word, *ngwane-inoto*, literally man of importance (from *inoto* = the centre).

Practically every district has one man with the title of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also H. I. Hogbin, "Social Advancement in Guadalcanal," *Oceania*, vol. viii, pp. 288-307.

*ngwane-inoto*, though their wealth varies considerably according to the number of persons in the group and whether or not they have any serious rivals to challenge their position. In populous districts, although the title is as a rule given to only one man, there is always a couple more with almost equal prestige. These men also give feasts, generally with the idea of succeeding to the position after the death of the accepted *ngwane-inoto*, but occasionally in order to displace him while he is still alive. Respect and authority are transferred when the old leader has several times been outdone in lavishness—perhaps because with advancing years he cannot work so hard, or because he is no longer industrious.

A really important *ngwane-inoto* has every four or five years to give a very large feast at which upwards of twenty pigs and several thousand taro are provided, to contribute either a pig or taro when any of his followers gives a small feast, and to help with a *tafuli'ae* or two if called upon when they marry.

#### BEGINNINGS OF SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT

Ambition rarely shows itself until a man has been married some time and has reached his early thirties. If he now has thoughts of establishing himself as a personage in the community he begins by cultivating larger gardens. His relatives are always ready to help, but when they do so he has to provide them with a good meal at the end of the day. A large number of workers therefore means a heavy drain on his resources, and at first he requests assistance only from his neighbours. As the area under cultivation increases so more and more workers are required, but the food available soon exceeds that given away, and no serious embarrassment is caused.

The man also does his best to get together a large herd of pigs. Every time the sows belonging to his relatives have litters he begs for one or two of the small pigs, and all those he breeds himself he looks after carefully. These animals have to be fed, and to lighten his labour he may ask his sisters if they are living not far away to look after a few. No payment is made for this service, but when the pigs are killed the women expect to receive the choicest joints.

Unattached relatives, such as widows and orphans, are

always made welcome in his household, since they can then give assistance at all times in garden work, the preparation of food for the pigs, and all other tasks. There is a saying to the effect that a man who wishes to become a *ngwane-inoto* must have a roof capable of providing shelter for many beds.

After a few years, when areas several acres in extent are under cultivation, and when he has perhaps half a dozen fat pigs as well as several more small ones, he announces that he intends to make an offering to the spirits of his ancestors. This amounts to a sort of public declaration that he aims at being accepted one day as a *ngwane-inoto*, though in practice many who begin with great plans find the drain on their energies so great that eventually they abandon their ambitions.

Sacrifices, consisting mainly of pigs, are given ostensibly to secure the goodwill of the spirits, and the ceremony takes place in the sacred grove where the ancestors concerned are buried. I shall speak at length of the religious aspects of this ceremony later; for the present it will be sufficient to state that it is the duty of a specialist, whom we may call the priest, to burn the kidneys of the pigs and to pray that the affairs of those present may be allowed to prosper. The remainder of the carcases, together with a good deal of taro, is then distributed. A week or two later a dance is held, again for the ostensible purpose of pleasing the ancestors, though the people take part mainly on account of their enjoyment of the activity itself.

I had the good fortune to attend several of these sacrifices and shall now describe that given by a young man named Faialatha of the Ombo district, who was only about thirty-two years old, so that this was his first bid for greatness (Plate XIV).

Everyone knew his intentions and the actual announcement therefore caused no surprise. One evening when I was sitting on the beach chatting we heard the sound of a slit-gong from over the hills—first a smart rat-tat-tat and then six slow beats. "So Faialatha is making his sacrifice in six days' time," remarked one of the bystanders. Each settlement has a wooden slit-gong to make announcements public, and various combinations of beats are associated with different events, such as deaths, betrothals, and sacrifices.

The ceremony was performed on a flat area alongside an old cemetery where many Ombo ancestors are buried.

PLATE XI



WOMEN COOKING FOR A FEAST.

Facing p. 15

PLATE XII



CARVING A PIG AND DRAINING THE BLOOD INTO BAMBOOS  
TAIALAITIA IS ON THE RIGHT

Faialatha's house stood close by, but the selection of the site was determined by the cemetery, not his house. Since my house was in their district I attended with people from Uala. On arrival we found ten carcases already placed in a line. The last pig had just been strangled, and the rope was still wound around its snout. Alongside were three large heaps of taro, each containing 1000 tubers all neatly arranged, and several small heaps, and not far away was a stone oven covered over with leaves, where, we learnt, taro was already being cooked.

Faialatha came to greet us and make us welcome. We were invited to sit on his veranda with the other guests until the food was prepared, and in the meantime were given betel-nut to chew. For the next two hours he himself was mainly occupied in carving the pigs. After the carcases had been disembowelled the kidneys were handed over to the priest, who proceeded to burn them, praying as he did so, while the crowd withdrew to a respectful distance. Then the blood from the pigs was drained off into bamboos (Plate XII), which were set up close to the fire to cook, and finally the meat was cut into joints. All the carving was done with great care, for it is considered almost an insult to offer a person meat which has been hacked about.

Women are not supposed to approach cemeteries and other sacred places, and while all this was going on they stood some distance away, viewing everything with great interest. Other writers, when describing similar ceremonies, have stated that women were "prevented" from going near, implying the use of force. In fact, however, the thought of restraint never enters anyone's head.

The taro was now laid out in smaller piles—I counted twenty-five—and when the joints had been placed on top everything was at last ready for the distribution.

By this time the remaining guests had arrived, about 150 in all, including all the Ombo residents and most of Faialatha's other relatives. They sat about chewing betel-nut and chatting to one another, and from them I learnt that three of the pigs and a good deal of the taro had been brought by relatives the day before, and that Faialatha himself was responsible for only seven pigs and 3000 taro.

Everyone seemed to derive an enormous amount of satisfaction from the sight of the food, the arrangement of

the taro in particular calling forth admiration. The pigs were compared with those at other feasts, and flattering remarks made about how fat some of them were. "We shall eat," people said, "till we cannot move, till our bellies reject food." After feasts I have seen men in agony from indigestion, and I always had many requests for castor oil. When I expressed amazement at the sight of so much to eat I was given accounts with minute details of former feasts and told how many days the food had lasted ; at a later date I was to see far greater quantities myself. This occasion, however, was a highlight in the lives of those who attended, and everyone appeared to be very happy.

On the completion of the preparations Faialatha displayed, on a frame specially erected for the purpose, a number of *tafuli'ae*, which all crowded round to examine. After a few minutes one each was given to the persons who had contributed pigs and taro, a proceeding which was greeted with great applause.

The food was then distributed amongst the leading men present, a pile to each one. A Malaita host does not apportion food to all his guests : he gives it only to the leading men, who divide it amongst their followers. Food is also never eaten in the presence of strangers, for fear that the crumbs may fall into the hands of sorcerers. Native feasts are thus in many respects very different from our own. Again, women are not allowed to share food which has been offered to spirits, since it is considered to be sacred, and they therefore eat pork only on the occasion of secular feasts, such as at weddings.

After all the guests had departed the oven was opened, and Faialatha and his more immediate relatives, who had assisted him throughout, had a meal of taro and cooked blood. A portion of the meat had also been saved for these men, but Faialatha himself, although he had provided so much, had nothing. "The giver of the feast has honour, not meat," he explained.

The salient features of this ceremony were repeated in all the others I attended. The host was always assisted in the preparation of the food of his closest relatives, and to them he gave the blood, a great delicacy, as a reward. He provided the bulk of the food, but generally a few other individuals gave a pig each, or some taro. These men were always

presented with a *tafuli'ae*, not as payment, but rather as an indication that the gift was appreciated, and as an earnest of the willingness of the host to make a similar gift at a later date.

The dance was held near the same cemetery a month after the feast. No more picturesque spot could be found anywhere. It was on a narrow shelf twenty-five yards wide on the otherwise steep slope of the mountain running down to Malu'u harbour. Above was a high limestone cliff, and 1000 feet below one could see the breakers on the reef and miles of open sea beyond. On one side was the cemetery, a dense mass of virgin bush with enormous trees from which hung trailing lianas and creepers, and on the other Faialatha's house with a waterfall behind.

Music for the dance in Malaita is provided by an orchestra of from twenty to forty sets of panpipes of varying sizes. The longest pipes in the largest instruments are upwards of three feet in length and the player has to twist his body sideways to keep the ends off the ground (Plate XIII). The various notes harmonize, and the general effect, especially against such a scenic background, is wonderfully thrilling. I can only liken the sound to certain passages on the wind in the slow movement of the F major symphony of Brahms.<sup>1</sup>

The dancers are all richly decorated (see Frontispiece and also Plates XIII and XIV). In their hair they have fancy combs and either white cowry shells or discs cut from clam-shell with a delicate fretwork of turtle-shell attached. Long sticks covered with woven designs in dyed rattan are worn in the ears, an ornament of white clam-shell in the septum, and strings of various shells around the neck. Most men also have armlets about six inches deep made from plaited fibre and multi-coloured shell discs, variegated belts for the waist, and seed-pod rattles around one ankle. In former times the men had no clothing, but to-day the young folk prefer to wear a bright cotton loincloth. The women, who watch from a distance, also have ornaments, but not nearly so many as the men.

On the occasion of Faialatha's dance the performers and orchestra assembled behind some bushes to one side. He

<sup>1</sup> These natives are also excellent vocalists, and when in some of the ceremonies the old men chant legends of former heroes a choral background in four parts is provided by the younger men.

was not dancing himself, but when they were all ready he led the procession to the open space. In his hand he carried a large bundle of red Cordyline leaves, and his whole demeanour, as he advanced with stately tread, was decidedly impressive. The dancers came on in pairs with the orchestra in their midst and formed up in two rows. The members of the orchestra stood facing one another, but all the rest turned towards the place where the women were congregated. Those men who were not dancing gathered to one side. As the panpipes were played, at first very slowly, the dancers moved their limbs in time, accentuating the rhythm with their seed-pod rattles. This continued for about twenty minutes, when everyone retired.

After an interval a second and much more brilliant movement began. The orchestra this time came in first and commenced slowly to encircle the whole arena. The dancers followed, but now they were in four sets, and, instead of remaining in the one place, began a sort of follow-my-leader one behind the other. They kept strictly to time, but as they went around they gyrated and leapt and gesticulated wildly with their arms. Three or four times they formed a chain and entwined themselves into a knot, from which at a given signal on the deep notes of the panpipes they unwound themselves, shouting at the top of their voices as they did so. All was done with an exquisite grace, and as a spectacle the whole performance could scarcely have been surpassed. Towards the end one or two spectators went up and congratulated individual dancers on their prowess.

After half an hour the orchestra again withdrew, but when the players had regained their breath a third movement, an exact repetition of the first, followed. Food which Faialatha had had cooked beforehand was then distributed, not to the dancers themselves, but to the leading men. These in turn apportioned what they received among their relatives, and the different parties set off home in high spirits. Later on those who had been singled out for special praise gave presents to the persons who had offered congratulations.

This dance provided a real red-letter day, and for a whole week little else was talked about. Merely to hear the music, even if one did not dance, it was said, made one's body feel light. One forgot all troubles and ailments, and even the aged felt young again. I well remember another occasion

PLATE XIII



PANPIPES



when, since we had a considerable distance to go, the Uala party had to leave early. As we climbed the mountain path the whole party paused every few minutes, "because the music was very beautiful and everyone felt happy."

It is of interest to compare the native reaction with my own. I found the music beautiful but distinctly melancholy, as the comparison with the *andante* of the Brahms symphony will have indicated. I mention this fact particularly, since all too frequently field workers are apt to read their own emotions into a native ceremony. It cannot, I think, be too often stressed that emotional reactions to music, or any other form of art, are determined mainly by culture.

I myself stood among the spectators, and there was no mistaking that all were profoundly excited, and in some cases exalted, by what was going on. Old men who could only hobble along with the aid of a stick stood and beat time with their hands, waving their heads from side to side. One old woman was so moved that she began to weep, lamenting as she did so that her only son, who had died many years before, was not there to take part. But the faces of the majority radiated happiness and high spirits. During the intervals those I knew well came to tell me what would happen next and to look out for particular points. I had also been told beforehand which performers I was to watch most carefully, very much as I might have informed some stranger at the Ballet who were the best dancers. It is no wonder that the abilities of specially good performers are talked about for more than a generation.

The dancers also enjoyed themselves thoroughly. One of them told me that while actually performing he thought only of himself in his endeavours to be so good that he would surpass the rest and win praise for his agility and skill ; but the movements are strictly regulated, and all have to submit both to the pattern of the dance—it would not be going too far to say the choreography—and to the rhythm of the music. So high spirited do the young men become that not infrequently wordy quarrels develop between them over all sorts of minor details. As a precaution the priest always utters a prayer to the ancestors beforehand, but if, nevertheless, a dispute does arise, the old men quickly intervene and order the culprits to hold their tongues. Do they wish the spirits to be angry and make them ill ? the old men ask.

Of course they do not. Then they must remain at peace with one another and reserve anger only for strangers.

The general belief, despite these minor quarrels, is that feasts and dances contribute towards the harmony of the kinship group. "Our bellies are full, our bodies are light, and we think only of laughter," said one informant. "Long-standing disputes are forgotten, because we are not angry when we dance. Music and dancing throw anger out. We see a kinsman against whom we have a grievance, but we think only that he is a kinsman, not of the grievance, and we dance together. Our old anger rises again only at a new injury."<sup>1</sup>

If this is indeed the effect of feasts and dances then clearly those who attend have an additional reason for gratitude to the man responsible : he gives his relatives peace as well as enjoyment. It is impossible to be certain, however, that long-standing disputes are so easily laid aside. My own impression was that for a month or two perhaps, while they had such diversions to occupy their minds, persons with grievances did tend to cherish more amicable feelings, but the happy state of affairs was usually temporary. My informants when I was able to point out a case where quarrelling had begun once more would reply either that this was exceptional, or else that new offences had been committed : they at least were certain of the beneficial effect of the feast.

The man who has given a feast and dance acquires the respect of the residents of the district and of his other relatives ; he is looked up to as a benefactor, and everyone showers him with praises. "Faialatha is a good man," people said, "he feeds us, he lets us dance." I noted how they now began to pay him little attentions, such as remaining silent when he spoke, in order to listen carefully to his opinions. Several men made him a small gift, sometimes only a bunch of choice bananas, to show their appreciation

<sup>1</sup> There is another side to this picture : I found that a number of the old people set out for a dance with what I can only describe as an under-current of apprehension, since, although its joys were eagerly anticipated, occasional expression was also given to a dislike of being among comparative strangers. Within the hamlet, where they know everyone intimately, they are safe, but amongst strangers anything may happen—even sorcery. The fact that precautions have to be taken to prevent quarrels is an indication that such fears are not without foundation. This aspect of the subject will be fully developed in a later publication.

and no doubt also to curry favour if ultimately he did become a *ngwane-inoto*, though the reason given was always simply "because he is my kinsman."

### THE TOP OF THE SOCIAL LADDER

Having publicly announced by this small celebration that he aims at acquiring social standing, the man with ambition has further to consolidate his position by collecting more wealth. He therefore sets to work to cultivate even larger gardens and breed still more pigs. Many of these are traded to natives of the Langalanga lagoon and thus a considerable number of strings of shell discs is also accumulated.

At this stage he may wed a couple of extra wives. That the object of these matches is primarily economic and not sexual is indicated by the fact that young widows are usually preferred, since they are apt to be more useful than girls at garden work. The wives of a *ngwane-inoto* have to toil much harder than other women, as, in addition to the cultivation of extensive gardens, they have to keep open house. On the other hand, they derive reflected prestige from their husband and usually have a considerable influence in the community.

The wealth of a man who is ambitious has continually to be placed at the disposal of his relatives. Every event of importance is celebrated with a feast, and although ordinary individuals do not supply as much food as a *ngwane-inoto*, they like to have as much as possible; indeed, their reputation depends upon them doing so. Contributions are therefore always acceptable, and if the man is mean he rapidly loses prestige. He has also to offer strings of shell discs towards the bride-price of the young men who have made themselves useful. Income, however, is to some extent augmented by the marriages of girls of the district, when he receives a share of the discs handed to their parents.

In spite of the heavy drain on his resources the rising young man has to put by a certain reserve in order to provide further feasts. These are again associated with sacrifices and followed by dances, but with the passing of the years each feast is bigger than the last, until perhaps twenty pigs will have to be killed at the one time.

Sometimes it happens that two or even three men are

## THE PAST

rivals, each one of them wishing eventually to be accepted as head of the group. In this event each tries at every one of his own feasts to give away more than the others have formerly done, while they in turn contribute lavishly in the hope that when they give feasts he will be unable to give them back an equivalent amount. If this does occur the man who has been outdone is not taunted to his face, but his rivals make slighting references behind his back, and unless he gives a still larger feast his reputation as a possible *ngwane-inoto* is lost. He may still continue to inspire considerable respect, for his wealth will give him power, but he will never be accepted as a leader.

The *ngwane-inoto* of neighbouring districts also try to outdo one another by giving feast after feast of colossal proportions, until one finally has to withdraw and admit defeat. The greatest rivals to-day are Irombaua of Su'u and Suina'o of Aeninggaule, each of whom has been struggling for years to give away the greater amount. Suina'o is at present considered the superior, since he held a feast at which, in addition to presents to other guests, he gave Irombaua 1000 taro and five pigs as his share. As the gift was handed over he remarked, with pardonable ostentation, "I cover you now Irombaua"—meaning that he was laying the obligation on him to be equally generous. People say that Irombaua will never be able "to come from underneath" and discharge it.

Sooner or later, if a man remains steadfast in his ambition, his homestead will become the general meeting place of the whole district. He is the centre of the group, gathering its members about him with the food and presents he gives away and the entertainments he provides. From this stage to that where he is the recognized leader the passage is easy : people gradually look up to him more and more, and finally speak of him as their *ngwane-inoto*.

Some time after this, but not too soon for fear that others should say he is presumptuous, he begins to wear the ornaments associated with the office, consisting of nose-studs of special shape and armbands into which certain kinds of herbs may be thrust, and to use a special kind of lime-pot and spatula for the betel mixture. To maintain his prestige, notwithstanding, he still has to be generous and make feasts, for if his wealth diminishes he will sink back once more into insignificance.

## THE ESTABLISHED LEADER

From the account I have given it will be apparent that leadership in Malaita is a career open to talents, since anyone can become a *ngwane-inoto* if only he works hard enough in his gardens and builds up a sufficiently large herd of pigs. The advantage possessed by the heir of an old leader is very slight, since much of the wealth he inherits, as we shall see in another chapter, is distributed at the old man's funeral. In any case, a mere accumulation of valuables is never sufficient for a person to establish himself in a position of authority ; he must give away wealth the whole time.

A proverb which is quoted if a *ngwane-inoto* has been guilty of conduct considered unworthy is of interest : " It is no matter if two birds fly high into the air, I know of what they are thinking." The two birds referred to are eagles, which fly above all other birds into the air where the wind is cool and fresh, but continue to think of foul things crawling on the ground, more particularly rats and snakes, which they are said to eat. The proverb may be regarded as an approximate equivalent to our *noblesse oblige*.

Although the people receive so much from their *ngwane-inoto* they by no means accept his constant demands for labour with equanimity, especially when he interrupts their own work. They are apt to murmur and grumble amongst themselves, saying he is thinking only of his own glory. " Let him work hard himself," snapped one man. " My reputation is not enhanced when he makes a feast, but I work too." In fact, however, the *ngwane-inoto* works far harder than anyone else—he is in his gardens daily from sunrise to sunset and in communal work always does quite as much as other people—and those who help the most do acquire prestige from their industry. Furthermore, the district as a whole is exalted by the feasts given by its *ngwane-inoto*, so that in the end, grumble as they will, people always give their assistance. It is to their advantage to do so : they all share in the *ngwane-inoto*'s wealth, partake of his feasts, and live under his protection.

A *ngwane-inoto* achieves the maximum prestige on the marriage of his son, when he is expected to give about twice the usual bride-price. Some men in the past have given as many as twenty-five *tafili'ae* with food in proportion.

## THE PAST

On the other hand, they have themselves received a large bride-price for their daughters. As a rule a *ngwane-inoto* prefers his children to marry into the family of an important personage, who then becomes a potential ally.

Once a man is accepted as the *ngwane-inoto* his followers look to him to organize such enterprises as concern them all and to maintain order amongst them, even with the use of force should that be necessary. Perhaps the most important of these wider activities are arranging for the performance of the necessary rites following on the death of a priest, organizing an expedition of vengeance if injury has been done by another group, and seeing that everyone is adequately protected if it is known that attack is planned when his own relatives have committed an offence.

## RITES FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF A PRIEST

On the death of the specialist whom I have referred to as the priest no further offerings can be made at the cemetery of which he was guardian until a series of distributions of food have taken place. During the interval the descendants of all the persons buried in the cemetery have no way of approaching their ancestors, and in consequence consider themselves to be in grave danger. The *ngwane-inoto* therefore hastens to begin the distributions as soon as possible, for they often take five years to complete. As my sojourn in Malaita was not long enough to permit me to see the whole series, I shall quote from the accounts given me of what happened when Suluo'o, a chief priest of Uala, died. He was succeeded by his son Marakwane, who was also the principal *ngwane-inoto* of the district.<sup>1</sup>

The first step consisted in the laying of a taboo on coconuts. Marakwane had the right to punish any infringements, but even if the culprit escaped detection it is said that the spirits took vengeance upon him. Then a large garden was made, Marakwane, of course, providing food for the workers. In due time 2000 taro tubers were harvested and piled up near his settlement. The 5000 coconuts which had accumulated were also collected and laid close by. In other islands I have

<sup>1</sup> Uala district was larger than most, and in consequence the residents were divided into three sections, each one of which had its own *ngwane-inoto* and priest.

often seen more than three times this quantity of nuts, but the palms do not grow well in the To'ambaita area, since it lies inland. A distribution then took place very much in the manner described already.

A few months later a new, much larger, garden was made. This taro, however, was made into puddings before distribution. The tubers were first roasted on a huge open fire (Plate XI) and then mixed with roasted *Canarium* almonds. This mixture is pounded with stout poles in wooden mortars, some of which are as much as 12 feet long and 18 inches high. On this occasion there were 3000 taro and 200 bamboo stems full of husked nuts. I have myself witnessed distributions of pudding at which about a ton has been given away.

After another interval the residents of the district were again called together to make four large gardens. When these were almost fit for harvesting a special house was constructed in Marakwane's settlement as a sort of *mbi'u* where the menfolk of the whole group could meet and discuss matters of common policy. In shape it was like an ordinary *mbi'u* but larger, and, for purposes of defence, the door was high up in the wall, so that one climbed a ladder to enter. It was also decorated with carvings of all sorts of birds and other natural species. Houses of this sort are only built when a priest has just died. The taro from the four gardens, 20,000 tubers, was used for the feast with which the conclusion of building operations was celebrated. Three hundred pigs were also provided, fifty by Marakwane and the rest by various members of the district.

This was followed by another distribution of pudding similar to the first, after which the whole series was finally brought to an end by a grand festival, when new dances specially composed for the occasion were performed. These had to be rehearsed for a long period, and again Marakwane fed those who took part. Everyone in the neighbourhood attended, and although the celebration was said to have the maintenance of peace and order as one of its functions, precautions had still to be taken to prevent fighting. Each entrance to the dance area had an arch ornamented with two kinds of leaves erected over it, one to nullify the effects of any sorcery which might have been performed beforehand, and the other to cool down the anger of anyone passing

beneath so that he would not want to fight. After all the guests had departed Marakwane himself swept the place where they had been standing with charmed Cordyline leaves and chanted a spell to drive away any evil magic they might have performed against himself and his kinsmen.

Sacrifices to the ancestors could now begin again in the usual way: once again the district owed a debt to the *ngwane-inoto*.

#### MAINTENANCE OF ORDER WITHIN THE GROUP

Discussion of vengeance when offences are committed by members of other groups I shall postpone for the time being and pass instead to a consideration of how the *ngwane-inoto* preserves order within his district over which alone he has authority.

In practice he is very seldom called upon to interfere, since, outwardly at least, residents of the same district generally live together in harmony. The ramifications of mutual dependence, which are expressed linguistically in the classificatory system, are so complex that people cannot afford to pursue their quarrels very far. A man who has made himself objectionable to his neighbours for some minor infringement of his rights runs the risk of losing their assistance in the future: on the other hand, they themselves have to remember that if they show their resentment too deeply he may equally refrain from helping them. It is in the interests of both parties therefore to turn a blind eye and maintain a decent silence. In the previous chapter I pointed out an additional reason why members of the same group are in the habit of swallowing any bitter feelings they may have for one another. Divided groups cannot put up an adequate defence against raids from outside and are also supposed to be an easy prey for sorcerers. In the next chapter I shall also discuss the possibility of securing redress through magic, which makes open hostilities unnecessary.

Yet although on the surface all may be peaceful, grievances are suppressed, not forgotten. I was myself in an excellent position to hear about these private grudges, since I was an outsider not in any way involved in everyday reciprocities, but sufficiently familiar with the workings of the community, nevertheless, for my friends to pour into my sympathetic

cars all the woes which otherwise they would have had to hide. All of them, I found, complained that their kinsfolk took advantage of their good nature and made inordinate demands upon their energy and patience. It was amusing sometimes to find that two "brothers", who outwardly were the greatest of friends, were only too eager, when they were alone with me, to tear one another's character to shreds. "Look at that lazy fellow over there," snapped a neighbour one day when several of us were helping him to make a new garden. "He comes along and makes a great show of his strength, but what does he do? He chats to this one and that one, then he asks me for tobacco, then he goes to drink at the stream, and now he says he is tired. Later, I shall have to give him betel-nut and food, but even you will do more than he." My own unskilled efforts were usually the object of such tolerant ridicule, and in ten minutes the two of them were laughing together over my clumsiness.

The natives themselves are aware of the danger of these bottled up grievances, and say that feasts are held, among other reasons, to prevent the possibility of their expression: people who have eaten and danced together feel so happy that quarrelling is impossible—or rather, is supposed to be impossible.

Disputes do, however, occur. In most cases the parties pour out a stream of abuse for a short time, but bystanders usually step in and separate them before they come to blows. They then avoid one another for a few weeks, but when they do finally meet behave as if nothing had happened. The *ngwane-inoto* interferes only if he is directly appealed to, or if matters are becoming so serious that a permanent breach seems likely. Even then a short harangue is generally sufficient to establish peace once more.

Children seem to be the chief source of trouble, since parents are always taking sides in their little squabbles. An incident which took place in a homestead at the back of my own house is worth quoting. Four families lived there, and the children were in the habit of playing together in an open space between the women's houses. One afternoon two little boys, seven and eight years of age, were drawing pictures on the ground with a stick, when suddenly the elder one boxed his companion's ears, and told him to stop rubbing out the marks. The little boy began to cry and ran

away to find his mother, though his father was also sitting watching the game and now strode over and began to beat the elder boy. The lad managed to break free, but as he ran away fell and cut his head open, so that he also began to yell and call for his mother. The woman left her cooking and came outside, inquiring what all the noise was about. The boy sobbed out his story, but by this time blood was pouring from the cut in his head. His mother hastily bound it up and then carried him off to find the *ngwane-inoto*, who lived about half a mile away.

In the meantime the men of the homestead had come up to find out what was happening. Other children told them the story, and they began to berate the man who had caused all the trouble for interfering in a childish squabble.

Half an hour later the *ngwane-inoto*, an old man, arrived, panting with breath from his exertions. He expressed strong resentment and severely upbraided the man for his foolishness. Had he not grown up, or was he also still a baby? Children must be left to settle their own disputes, and parents should not interfere except to separate them if they hurt each other. The wrongdoer listened quietly, and when the harangue had finished went off into the bush, where he remained for a few days. On the morning of his return he told his wife to pack her belongings and come with him to another settlement since he had no intention of remaining in the place where his son had been so badly treated. The woman refused to leave, and he went off alone to the homestead of a relative. His anger apparently did not subside for several weeks, but he then returned and settled down as if nothing had happened.

Two or three similar quarrels occurred during my stay on the island. The whole social group was never involved, and in every case the two parties resumed relations after an interval of a couple of weeks. The *ngwane-inoto* intervened only once, and then merely to reprimand the chief culprit.

Another source of trouble is the destruction caused by pigs. Owners of gardens are expected to protect their property, but in a tropical climate timber very soon rots, and fences are always falling to pieces, so that considerable damage may be caused by a stray pig. The owner has no redress, but if he actually discovers the animal in his garden his anger usually gets the better of his judgment and he kills it. The man to whom it belonged then has the right to

demand compensation, but if much damage has been done this may be refused. The *ngwane-inoto* then acts as mediator and does his best to compel them to make friends.

A quarrel of this kind occurred in Uala when a man named Fo'akambara killed a pig belonging to a person called Konofilia. The latter demanded compensation, and added that if he received the full value of the animal he was prepared to hand something back on account of the vegetables it had destroyed. On the refusal of this request he sent a young nephew to kill one of Fo'akambara's pigs in revenge. Fo'akambara heard its squeals as it lay dying and went to investigate. Seeing at once that it had been speared, he followed the young man's tracks, overtook him and shot an arrow at him. This fortunately missed its mark, and the young man fled home unharmed. Half a dozen men were sitting in the homestead, and as soon as they heard his story seized their weapons and began to prepare themselves for war.

In the meantime Fo'akambara had also collected a few followers and was on the way to attack Konofilia. The two parties met where the path crossed a small stream, but before battle was joined, following the usual custom, they spent several minutes hurling insults at one another.

While this was going on one of the womenfolk ran with the news to the *ngwane-inoto*. He did not wait to ask questions, but ordered two of his leading warriors to stop the fight immediately. These men ran between the opposing parties and commanded them in the name of their *ngwane-inoto* to desist. Then they began to lecture them on their foolishness. How could a group unite to resist an enemy, they asked, when brother was busy making war on brother? Did these young hot bloods not know that sorcerers always attacked divided groups? And what would happen if they killed one another? Would not the ancestors be angry? If young people want to try their weapons they must slay enemies in other districts, not seek to injure themselves.

The men went back home quietly and some days later the *ngwane-inoto* made Fo'akambara and Konofilia exchange an equal number of *tafuli'ae* and other valuables as a sign that they no longer harboured enmity. This was the last that was heard of the matter.

Another dispute occurred recently when two men both

claimed sole ownership of a clump of Canarium almond trees. One of them became so angry that finally he cut down the whole lot. On inquiry the *ngwane-inoto* found that they were really the property of the other man and therefore ordered the destroyer to hand over a quantity of *tafuli'ae* as compensation for the damage.

The *ngwane-inoto* may also intervene, perhaps at the invitation of the parents, if a young man needs a reprimand for consistent laziness or failure to do his fair share of communal work. A lecture on the possible evil consequence is usually sufficient to make him realize his obligations.

The worst cases of men who are unable to live at peace with their neighbours did not in former times come before the *ngwane-inoto*, however, since the belief in sorcery provided another means of dealing with them. A district sometimes finds itself afflicted with a person who quarrels with everybody, mostly over matters which, in similar circumstances, other people would be prepared to overlook. There are at present only two men of this type in the part of the country where I was living, but I heard of a few others who are now dead. These two showed no obvious signs of warped mentality, except that they seemed to be impervious to public opinion, but I was left in no doubt as to their unpopularity, and more than once was told that they probably practised sorcery.

Actually, as we shall see in the next chapter, sorcery, the object of which is the death rather than the illness of the victim, is probably never carried out at all. The native belief, nevertheless, is very strong, and if a man dies those who are known to have borne him a grudge are liable to find themselves held responsible, even though there can be no real evidence of their supernatural power. A person who squabbles all the time is naturally eligible for suspicion more often than other people, and it is soon taken for granted that he must for certain be a sorcerer. Until recently, once he had acquired this reputation he was bound to be put to death by the relatives of his supposed victims. His own kinsman, far from seeking vengeance, were usually glad to be rid of him.

To-day the Administration does not allow the people to take matters into their own hands, and the *ngwane-inoto* has to deal with the situation as best he can. He has no right to

order anyone to leave the district where his ancestors are buried, but since he has the power to do so this may happen. One trouble-maker was told to leave the district a year or two before my visit, and at present is living with his mother's relatives, to whom he is a constant source of embarrassment. The residents of the district where he formerly dwelt admitted that their *ngwane-inoto* had acted in an "illegal" manner—although he might have quoted one or two other examples as precedent had he wished—but most of them were agreed that the man was such a nuisance that the action was amply justified.

In ordinary circumstances—for habitual disturbers of the peace are very rarely met with—the *ngwane-inoto* is prevented from using his power in an arbitrary manner by the fact that his position depends upon the goodwill and help of his followers. He dare not incur their displeasure or they may refuse to work for him and go and live elsewhere. A single wrongdoer who is resentful of punishment is of no importance, but matters are entirely different when the sympathies of the whole district are engaged, and tales are told of how in the past *ngwane-inoto* who had been guilty of flagrant injustice or cruelty were deserted by all their followers. Whether or not these are true it is difficult to say; but they must at least serve as an effective warning to the *ngwane-inoto* of to-day. I came across one or two leaders who had been distinctly unfair to individual followers, but in the main every one of them discharges his obligations with insight and judgment. The few minor shortcomings have always been overlooked, since in other respects authority has been used for the general well-being.

It will now be clear why I have avoided the word chief. The *ngwane-inoto* is certainly the leader of his little district group, but even there the retention of his authority is dependent entirely upon the use to which it is put.

## CHAPTER III

### CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Crime occurs very rarely within the district, but if an offence is committed there is a person in authority, the *ngwane-inoto*, who can be appealed to for justice. Outside the district, however, formal control is entirely lacking : Malaita has neither paramount chiefs nor councils where grievances can be ventilated. Our next task will be an investigation of what happens when a member of one district group interferes with a member of another. Broadly, we may say that everyone has to act as his own policeman and lawyer, and that if the man whose person or property has been injured makes no move to punish the offender nothing at all is done. The wronged individual can depend, nevertheless, upon the assistance of his kinsmen to secure redress.

Offences can be classified according to the reaction which is considered appropriate to them. In the majority of cases the injured party seeks redress by recourse to magic, but two special types of offence are held to justify the relatives of the victim in taking the life of the offender. These are murder—a category which includes almost all deaths, since disease and accidents are always attributed to sorcery—and offences against the sexual code.

#### RETALIATION WITH MAGIC

As native ideas about physiology are crude in the extreme, and as they know nothing at all about pathology, it is not surprising to find that they are firmly convinced that illness may be induced by performance of appropriate rites. Every disease recognized has associated with it one or more magical systems, and it is believed that the symptoms begin to develop soon after the rites are carried out. Practically everyone has a knowledge of at least one system ; that is to say, every single individual in the community imagines that he has the power to make the rest suffer. A convenient weapon is thus

provided for the punishment of wrongdoers, and in practically all minor offences, such as failure to pay debts or to furnish assistance in agriculture and other work, theft of produce, lying and slander, the injured party makes no further move than to carry out magic.

This method of retaliation has the additional advantage of secrecy. The rites are never performed in public, and as not even the victim is aware of what has taken place vengeance is impossible. Magic in consequence provides an excellent means of punishing members of the district group as well as outsiders. Its use within the group is in theory discouraged, but most of the people I knew best confessed in private that they had inflicted illnesses on their near neighbours. Kete'au, for example, in a period of three months carried out magic against two outsiders and one kinsman. The offences were failure to treat his wife with proper respect, handing over bad fish at the market in exchange for excellent taro, and giving an unpalatable joint of pork at a feast. Irakwau in four months bewitched no less than two outsiders—one for spreading false reports about him and the other for stealing betel-nut—and two kinsmen—one for losing a borrowed tool and the other for failing to keep a promise to help him make a new garden. I had the good fortune to be able to watch Irakwau's behaviour when he was in the presence of these four men. Not once did he betray the slightest animosity. "They must not suspect me," he explained, "or they will pay me back."

Although no one hides the fact of his knowledge of a system to cause disease, the actual spells, in which the main virtue of the magic is supposed to lie, are not disclosed, except to the man's legitimate heirs, or, very occasionally, to a person who, having no magic of his own, wishes to buy some. I was able to persuade my most intimate companions, however, to allow me to record theirs and shall quote as a typical example the magic used to produce a complaint (dropsy ?) in which the whole body swells. The owner of this system goes to the middle of the garden of the man he wishes to bewitch and recites the following spell over a handful of earth collected from a termite nest :

"The nest of the termites swells, grows large ;  
 Blood swells up from the trunk, grows large ;  
 The body of—[here the man's name is mentioned] swells,

Swells downward from the neck.  
 Worms writhe in his belly,  
 Worms writhe in his trunk.  
 Kerero, Thafulo'o, Faioto, Tala'u,  
 This is your earth.  
 Make the body of—swell,  
 Boil up from his liver.  
 Make this magic effective through your power." <sup>1</sup>

On the conclusion of the spell the earth is carefully blown upon and scattered over the garden. The man then goes away convinced that his enemy will be afflicted with the disease when next he plants taro.

Soil from the termite nest is selected because these mounds, which are sometimes two or three feet high, "look like a swelling in the ground" and thus have a superficial resemblance to the disease. The four men, Kerero, Thafulo'o, Faioto, and Tala'u, were ancestors of the man who told me the spell and in their lifetime had used the magic.

Every system of magic has both harmful and curative spells, and if someone falls ill the relatives send for a man who knows the spells of that particular disease to make the cure. For swelling-sickness a branch is cut from a *kwau* tree, one of the very few which lose all their leaves at once and stand bare for a few weeks before new foliage grows. (The vast majority of trees in the tropics are evergreens and never at any time bare.) The man pulls the leaves from this branch and recites the following spell over them :

"The *kwau* leaves fall down;  
 The blood of swelling falls down,  
 The body fluids fall down,  
 The worm falls down.  
 The *kwau* leaves fall down;  
 The swollen flesh falls down,  
 Falls from the neck, falls from the spine,  
 Falls to flowing streams.  
 Kerero, Thafulo'o, Faioto, Tala'u,  
 This is your magic to take away swelling.;  
 Make him vomit,  
 Take away his swelling;  
 Make this magic effective through your power."

<sup>1</sup> The spells quoted in this section were all recorded from the same person.

The leaves are steeped in water which the patient is then given to drink. It is said that the swelling soon disappears and that the flesh falls away like leaves from a *kwau* tree in autumn. If the "doctor" is a relative no payment is expected ; otherwise he is given ten porpoise teeth.

As a rule no attempt is made to discover whose magic is actually responsible for the illness, nor is the spell of the identical system which caused the disease considered necessary for a cure. Indeed, it would usually be impossible to find out since, as has been mentioned, the rites are always performed in secret purposely to avoid discovery.

It is easy to understand that the ordinary incidence of disease where the resistance of the patient is triumphant is perfectly consistent with these magical beliefs. But they can be made to cover other cases. One man had a running sore on his leg for years and could only walk with the aid of two sticks. Surely, I asked, his relatives sent for help as soon as the sore first appeared ? Yes, was the reply, but as the magic had begun in the first place to work from the inside a large area of flesh beneath the skin was already putrid before any outward sign was visible, and it was therefore too late to make a cure. Other cases were explained in a similar manner, or else the excuse was offered that the disease had been caused by a type of magic known only to one man, and that for some reason he intended to keep his knowledge to himself.

Not only diseases but all sorts of misfortunes can in native eyes be produced by magic. There are systems to make crops wither and die, to cause fences to rot away so that pigs can break them down and spoil the gardens, to send village pigs away into the hills, to drive fish from a canoe, and so forth.

The question arises, does this magic really work ? Obviously fences cannot be made to rot, nor crops to wither, but is it possible to make a person ill ? Poisons are never used, so that if magic has any effect it must of necessity be by suggestion. Observers in other societies have reported cases where natives have died after the public performance of magical rites to secure their death. One can understand that if the individuals concerned had been guilty of breaches of important tribal laws and had by common consent merited their fate they might then in despair have lain down and died. But in Malaita the rites are not carried out in public, and as the "victim" is purposely kept in ignorance the

result is nil. It is true that if a man becomes ill a guilty conscience may cause him to think that he has been bewitched, and so make him grow worse, but his fears are easily overcome by curative magic, which is believed in just as implicitly as black magic itself. Thus when Faialatha caught a severe cold he believed that Suina'o was responsible. "I took betel-nut from Suina'o's areca palms," he told me. "You know yourself how bad-tempered all the Aeninggaule are [Suina'o's district]. Other people would not have objected but that crowd keep their palms for themselves." In other words, he had been discovered helping himself without permission. A magical ceremony was carried out, and I administered quinine and aspirin. The next day he felt much better. "That magic of Aeninggaule," he remarked, "it was never strong. Our Ombo magic is far better. To-morrow I shall be well again."

I have heard Europeans in the Solomons say that they have seen Malaita natives lie down and die because they thought magic had been performed against them. I myself, however, have never come across a single case and find difficulty in believing that they ever occur, except perhaps when a man is alone in a completely strange environment, as, for example, on a plantation. He may then be so utterly miserable that he refuses to eat, in which event his death would be the result of starvation, though in his own mind he might account for his decline by the belief that he had been bewitched.<sup>1</sup> In ordinary circumstances, when the native is living in an environment to which he is accustomed, it is unlikely that he will die on account of his morbid imaginings when he can just as easily, and with more comfort to himself, believe in the remedy.

The reasons why Europeans continue to accept the witchcraft theory do not concern us here, but it is worth noting that very few of them have had any medical training.

<sup>1</sup> Some years ago the firm of Lever's took away a few Rennell Island natives, who had never seen a white man before, to work on one of their estates. Within a few weeks several were dead, and the remainder were only saved by returning them promptly to their homes. Europeans have told me that those who died were all perfectly well on the previous day, but my own cook boy, who was at the time working on the same plantation, informed me that they refused to eat, so that the main cause of death was apparently starvation due to homesickness. The fact that they had no immunity to malaria, which is endemic in all the larger Solomon Islands, may also have been a contributing factor.

The natives' belief in the efficacy of their magical systems remains unshaken because their health is so bad. There are many unpleasant tropical diseases, such as malaria, dengue, blackwater fever, framboesia, leprosy, elephantiasis, hook-worm, and tropical ulcers, as well as those introduced by Europeans in the nineteenth century, including tuberculosis, dysentery, whooping cough, measles, gonorrhoea, and influenza. For none of these is there any known remedy except magic, and a native is lucky if he goes through the year without confinement in bed for two or three weeks. Every performance of magic is thus inevitably followed sooner or later by the illness of the "victim". I have even had two men confess, or I should rather say claim, responsibility for the complaint of a third whom I was trying to cure. Correspondingly, performance of curative magic is usually followed by recovery.

The situation with regard to other types of misfortune magic is similar. Timber rots quickly in the hot damp climate, and pigs are continually breaking into gardens and destroying crops. Again, in agriculture no manures are available, and as insect pests and the weather cannot be controlled, crops are often spoiled.

This complete acceptance of something which is in fact totally ineffective is of profound social significance : disease and misfortune magic enable a person who considers himself to have been injured to relieve his feelings without causing the slightest inconvenience to anyone. He secures satisfaction without injuring his enemy, risking his own skin or disturbing the community life.

The same magic also serves as a safety valve for anger which is not considered to be just or reasonable : it forms a harmless outlet, that is to say, for jealousy, malice, and spite. I knew one man who tried to bewitch a fellow candidate for *ngwane-inoto* honours because he had more pigs than himself, another who attempted to injure a woman who spurned his advances, and a third, also a rejected suitor, who uttered spells to destroy the gardens of his successful rival. Conduct of this kind is regarded as shabby and mean, and a person would never admit in public what he had done. Yet magic is such a convenient weapon that I know full well that most people have at some time or other used it without "legitimate" excuse.

Another important use of magic is in the protection of orchards and gardens from thieves. Areas under cultivation cannot be kept under proper surveillance, since they are situated at some distance, often up to two miles, from the homestead. The owner usually recites a disease spell close by and leaves his property in perfect confidence, secure in the belief that any thief will be punished even if his identity is not known. A bunch of brightly coloured leaves is tied up on a tree near at hand as a warning that trespass is dangerous. His confidence is as a rule not misplaced, for most people have no desire to risk their health.

When the owner wishes to collect produce from a protected garden or orchard he has to recite another spell to neutralize the effect of the first. In swelling-sickness magic he makes a miniature broom of twigs and pretends to sweep away the soil from the termite nest, reciting as he does so :—

"The earth is swept away,  
The swelling-sickness is swept away.  
Kerero, go away; Thafulo'o, go away;  
Faioto, go away; Tala'u go away.  
Make this magic effective through your power."

If later he wishes to reimpose the magic he recites the original spell once more.

#### SORCERY AND MURDER

Death, like disease, is also considered to be an "unnatural" phenomenon, and except when violence has been resorted to, sorcery, *so'o* as it is called, is always given as the reason.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it is also believed that a man cannot die, even if the direst rites are performed, if his ancestors protect him. This they are unwilling to do only if he has broken some religious taboo.

Everyone believes that sorcery exists, but, although I met many persons who openly boasted of their spells to cause disease, not even my intimate friends would admit a knowledge of how to bring about death by magical means, and I therefore cannot give first hand information on the subject.

<sup>1</sup> The natives of Malaita sharply distinguish between magic to cause illness and magic to cause death. Anthropologists normally apply the term sorcery to both, but for convenience of discussion I shall in this book restrict its use to the latter.

PLATE XIV



TAIALATHA.

[facing p. 8b]



According to popular report very few persons perform *so'o*, and all of them keep their secrets to themselves. Each one possesses a spirit familiar, which in appearance is like a small misshapen human being, except that its skin is wrinkled and covered all over with grizzled hair. If a sorcerer has an enemy he wishes to kill he steals some of his food remains—ciumbas, for example, or fruit peelings, or the husks of arcca nuts—calls up his familiar from the spirit world with a spell and gives it the fragments to eat. The victim becomes ill at once and within a very short time, in spite of every remedy, dies—that is unless his ancestors protect him and render the whole procedure innocuous.

The main secrets of *so'o* are connected with the spells used to call up the familiar from the spirit world. After the sorcerer has taught these to his heir he divides a taro and gives half to the spirit and half to the young man, since once they have shared a meal it is thought that the spirit will never harm him.

When a member of a powerful district dies his relatives usually desire revenge, and an inquiry is accordingly held to establish the identity of the sorcerer responsible. As *so'o* is always carried out in the darkest secrecy, however, magic has to be employed for the purpose, and a specialist with a knowledge of the necessary spells has to be in charge. In company with the closest relatives of the dead man he proceeds after nightfall to the cemetery and there burns a bamboo containing hair cut from the corpse together with several flowers and leaves, all of them distinctive on account of their colouring, such as the scarlet hibiscus, a large white sweet-smelling flower, a yellow flower, and a vivid red creeper. Informants stated that as soon as the last ember is cold the specialist becomes possessed by a spirit which leads him, with the whole party at his heels, to the house of the sorcerer. Here a tiny light is seen to be shining brightly over the roof, convincing proof that the occupant has had dealings with the spirit world. Many of my friends had been present at such "inquests", and all gave me positive assurances that the light was plainly visible.

I believe myself that *so'o* is a figment of native imagination and is never carried out. I base this conclusion not on the fact that spirit familiars can have no existence, for persons in other societies, including our own, have at different times

seriously claimed to have been on speaking terms with the supernatural. In Malaita, however, everyone believes that his own magic has in the past made his enemies ill, and the obvious conclusion is that death is brought about by a process of the same type—the whole fantastic theory, that is to say, is the result of ignorance and of inability to realize that death is "natural". The few individuals who might wish to have dealings with familiars would probably be deterred by the conviction that the "inquest" is infallible and that they would therefore have to pay the penalty with their lives.

Even if *so'o*, or some comparable rite, really is performed, however, it cannot be any more effective than disease magic, for no one would ever take the risk of admitting openly that he was a sorcerer, so that the victim must always be unaware of what has been done. Those who claim to have seen the light indicating the house of the guilty party must either have mistaken a star or a firefly or, more probably, have been the willing victims of their own imagination. The same applies to the "inquest" specialists, for those I questioned appeared to be seriously convinced of their power.

What happens when a death occurs is this : the survivors consider the question, with whom was the dead man most unfriendly ? If someone had quarrelled with him recently this person is almost certain to be blamed ; if not their suspicion lights on any man who may be supposed to be envious of his wealth or social position. An inquest is held—and public opinion becomes the established truth.

I discovered, for example, that when Fiuomea of Omba died his relatives suspected Irakwau of Aeninggaule. On inquiry I learnt that although the two men had never had an open dispute, Irakwau had been angry when Fiuomea had refused to become his ally at the time an attack had been contemplated on a neighbour who was also suspected of sorcery. After the "inquest", sure enough, the light was seen hovering over Irakwau's house. Then when the father of Aningali, one of my best informants, died, Molia of Alilo was accused. On this occasion the two men had had a violent quarrel only a few weeks before. No doubt if Molia had died first Aningali's father would have been blamed. In a third case the person accused was known to be jealous on account of the dead man's greater wealth.

When the dead man has lived at peace with everybody for

years it seems that suspicion falls on one of those persons whom I have described as habitual trouble-makers. Such people are always unpopular, and, since they are so often involved in disputes it is soon taken for granted that they must be sorcerers.

The relatives of the dead man as a rule wish to kill the sorcerer, but if they actually do so they have to be prepared for reprisals. His kinsmen may deny his guilt or argue that, since they did not see the light over his house, they have no proof of his association with a spirit familiar. They will then claim the right to take vengeance upon the men who killed him. For this reason it was customary in former times, I was told, to avenge only the deaths of *ngwane-inoto* and other important men. But with the introduction of firearms during the labour traffic, murder could be accomplished much more simply, and at the end of the nineteenth century raiding was very much on the increase. The Administration fortunately has now confiscated all the old guns.

When it had been agreed that a dead man was to be avenged the slaying was usually carried out by a raiding party acting under the orders of an experienced killer (*ngwane-ramo*, literally, man of strength), who had been asked to take the leadership either by the closest relatives or else by the *ngwane-inoto* of the group. In some districts there were several killers each one of whom was capable of organizing such a raid, but where no such leader was available locally the dead man's relatives put a price on the sorcerer's head. Attracted by the prospect of this reward, and also of acquiring glory, some killer from another place then went and dispatched him by stealth.

Counter revenge by the relatives of the supposed sorcerer was carried out only if he was a person of some social standing and they themselves were sufficiently numerous to feel confident of success. If he was unimportant or for some reason unpopular scarcely anyone could be persuaded to join in avenging him. A raid of this kind, however, led not infrequently to a long-continued vendetta.

If the sorcerer's relatives were unable—or unwilling—to carry out reprisals they allowed it to become known that they were prepared to receive compensation for his death, and a few *taful'ae* and porpoise teeth were then formally

handed over. This gift is referred to as the *fonoa*, literally completion, because acceptance meant that the relatives considered the matter closed. Before the *tafuli'ae* were used again they were ceremonially offered to the spirits by a priest to ensure the ancestors would not punish their descendants for failing to take revenge.

The death of the *ngwane-inoto* of Takiniano illustrates the procedure normally followed when an important man died. After the funeral the sons announced their intention of killing the sorcerer, whoever he might prove to be. As an inducement for others to join them they publicly displayed all the valuables they had received from their father and indicated that these would be distributed amongst the members of the raiding party. Various relatives and a few other persons demonstrated their readiness to co-operate by contributing to the store. The presence among the latter of a man named Sekeo, the *ngwane-inoto* of a neighbouring but much less powerful district, caused some surprise, since he was suspected of being jealous of the dead man's superior wealth.

Some days later the "inquest" was held in the presence of the sons and a few close relatives. The specialist led them along the road to Sekeo's house, and there over the door they saw the sorcery light shining. They concluded that he had expressed his readiness to help with the express object of deluding them into a belief in his innocence. "But indeed they suspected him all the time," added my informant.

Plans were laid as quickly as possible, and a few days later a raiding party shot Sekeo in the back with arrows while he was working in the garden with his wives. They all ran up and hacked the corpse about and then departed to hold a huge celebration. Every pig the sons had inherited was killed, and the wealth also distributed amongst those who had taken part. The leader received four *tafuli'ae* and the rest one each.

Sekeo's relatives, realizing that they were no match for the Takiniano people, made no attempt at reprisals, and several months later accepted four *tafuli'ae* and a couple of hundred porpoise teeth as *fonoa*.

Another case in which reprisals did not follow the original revenge occurred between the districts of Manafiu and Aeninggaule. On this occasion the person who was slain

was so quarrelsome that his death was not regretted. It is said that the Manafiu folk actually showed the sorcery light to the Aeninggaul *ngwane-inoto*, who told them to make haste and put the sorcerer to death before he caused further trouble.

The case to which I have already referred of the father of my informant Aningali is worth considering in greater detail. Neither the dead man nor the suspected culprit, Molia of Alilo, was a *ngwane-inoto*, but both were persons of standing. The latter had no children, but Aningali decided that it would be wise to seek advice before he definitely made up his mind to kill, more especially since the *ngwane-inoto* of the district where he was living was of Alilo stock on the mother's side, and accordingly owed Molia loyalty. He therefore discussed the matter with the leader of his own mother's district. This man refused direct assistance on the grounds that the dead man was not sufficiently important to warrant the risks of a raid, but promised to protect Aningali to the best of his ability if the Alilo folk attempted counter vengeance.

Having secured this assurance Aningali decided that the sorcerer must die. He took into his confidence only four of his most intimate friends, and they all went together one evening to Molia's house. After dark they stealthily crawled to the door and Aningali shot him with his gun. As they could see by the glow of the fire, however, that he was only wounded, they set the thatch alight. Two men blundered out in terror and were allowed to escape, but when the wounded man reached the doorway the five raiders knocked him on the head simultaneously.

They then took to their heels and ran back as fast as they could to Aningali's settlement, where he distributed a number of *tafuli'ae*. For the next four weeks he had to remain in hiding in the bush, but at last an opportunity presented itself, and he made his escape to relatives on the other side of the island. After an interval of about two years he caused inquiries to be made as to whether the *ngwane-inoto* of Alilo would accept *fonoa*. Satisfactory assurances were given, and he went back home and arranged a day immediately for its presentation. This took place in the presence of the relatives of both parties, and the two men afterwards sat down together and exchanged betel-nut, thus signifying their mutual trust.

## THE PAST

I asked Aningali whether vengeance was worth all this trouble and danger. "I was young," he replied, "and young men have not learnt to be afraid. Yes, you are right when you ask was I not hungry and cold. I tell you when the rain came sometimes I had no roof, and I was with strangers for many months. But you know yourself that young men think nothing of that. Here in Malaita when the father dies we think of how he cared for us in our infancy. We love our fathers : that is why we wish to kill the murderers. But that is not all. Reputation, that is also important. I have told you before how much we think about our reputation. You see, when a son kills his father's murderer people talk about him. They say, so and so there, he is a good son, he must have loved his father. Did he think about the danger ? No, he remembered only that his father had been bewitched. That is reputation : that is fame. Two things make a man avenge his father, love and fame." After this murder Aningali became a famous *ngwane-ramo* himself and several times collected the reward for putting sorcerers to death single-handed.

For examples of counter-vengeance, generally leading to vendettas, one need go no farther than Uala. This district was so powerful that apparently it always retaliated if a member was killed. About thirty years ago Tali, one of the leading men, was put to death as a sorcerer by a party from Manafiu. They had also hoped to kill Ofilu his son, a notorious *ngwane-ramo*, but he made his escape to the jungle. While he was still in hiding he persuaded his relatives to organize a return raid, with the result that three Manafiu settlements were practically wiped out. The remaining residents of the district fled in confusion, but after a few months, when they had persuaded a number of allies to join them, made a united attack on Uala. The arrangements had been kept a close secret, but somehow the news leaked out at the last moment, and the Uala folk were able to take refuge in a huge limestone cavern, though unknown to the enemy, they also sent out two or three messengers to relatives for aid. These reinforcements took the Manafiu party by surprise in the rear while they were in the act of cutting down the undergrowth in front of the cavern so that they could carry it by storm. In the subsequent battle Uala was completely victorious, and Manafiu had to beat an ignominious

retreat. No doubt this strife would have continued had not the Administration at that point stepped in.

On another occasion this same district was involved in a battle with Aeninggaule, when the death of a man who had been engaged in a feud was ascribed to sorcery on the part of the father of his opponents. The trouble began when some Uala youths stole a pig belonging to a man from Aeninggaule and he retaliated in over-drastic fashion by burning the *mbi'u* where they lived. He died shortly afterwards whereupon the youths' father, who owned the house, was "proved" guilty of sorcery and murdered. The two groups then mustered all their forces and met in a pitched battle, in which four men were killed, two on each side, and many wounded. Eventually a *ngwane-inoto* from another district who had both Uala and Aeninggaule ancestors intervened and arranged a peace-making ceremony in which each side gave the other twenty pigs and twenty *taful'ae*.

When two groups were at enmity for a long period they developed an intense hatred, and after a decisive engagement the victors sometimes annihilated their enemies and ate the bodies. Consumption of human flesh was entirely confined to occasions of this kind.

This account of sorcery may now be briefly summarized : death is regarded as an act of hostility by some person known to have cherished hatred against the dead man. If the relatives lack wealth and social standing they make no move to carry out punishment, since to do so might be dangerous ; but if, on the other hand, they are sufficiently powerful, and the dead man was a personage in the community, an "inquest" is held to discover the culprit. His identity is established not by scientific assessment of evidence—that would be impossible—but by an appeal to the supernatural, and they proceed to vengeance on the strength of this identification.

The kinsfolk of the man who has been killed are generally not prepared to acquiesce in a judgment with respect to which they were not consulted, and accordingly are apt to regard the killing as cold-blooded murder. But once again if he was unimportant they realize the foolishness of seeking revenge, and only if he also was a personage do they attack the slayers. A blood feud may then develop and many persons be killed before the matter is finally settled.

The natives, when describing the action of sorcery without reference to particular cases, state that the victim is always taken ill before he dies. Deaths by what we would call misadventure—by drowning, for example, or by falling from a tree—are, however, also attributed to sorcery, and if possible, avenged. Accidental homicide is similarly treated. The person actually responsible has always to pay some compensation to the relatives, but where no suspicion of evil intent rests upon him the moral responsibility is fixed on a sorcerer who is thought to have caused the accident. Thus when Suluo'o shot a companion while they were out hunting together an "inquest" was held and the sorcerer killed. Everyone knew that Suluo'o would not have shot his friend on purpose, and his explanation, that he had stumbled over a log and clutched the trigger as he fell, was found perfectly acceptable.

#### SEXUAL OFFENCES

These natives set a high value on pre-marital chastity for women, and wives are also expected to be faithful to their husbands. No young man would ever dream of marrying a girl who had been involved in a scandal, and her only prospect is a union with a middle-aged widower. Her bride-price is also reduced by more than half, and the exchanges of food are entirely dispensed with.

Yet youths sometimes manage to persuade girls to yield to their advances, luring them on, so it is said, by promises of marriage. If the parents discover that a girl has been seduced—for pregnancy may, of course, occur—they are very angry; her reputation is permanently destroyed, and they themselves are at an economic disadvantage through loss of her bride-price. The girl is always severely beaten, but their anger is directed mainly against the seducer. Relatives come to their assistance, and an endeavour is made to kill him. But as he is in turn supported by his relatives there is usually a compromise, and compensation is accepted instead. Vengeance is only carried out if the girl is the daughter of a *ngwane-inoto*, since the whole district considers that as its reputation is at stake the insult must be wiped out with blood.

A fairly recent case which was finally settled by acceptance

of compensation was the seduction of Rorombarafa by Ngwa'inju, an orphan who some years before had attached himself to an important *ngwane-inoto*. On learning of his daughter's pregnancy, the father called his relatives together, and it was agreed that an attempt should be made on Ngwa'inju's life. The young man in the meantime had confessed to his *ngwane-inoto* and asked him to intercede on his behalf. An invitation was accordingly dispatched inviting Rorombarafa's father to talk the matter over. When he arrived he stood in the centre of the settlement and uttered a few threats in a loud voice, but the *ngwane-inoto* came forward and took him by the hand to his house. Here food was served, and subsequently three *tafuli'ae* and three pigs handed over as compensation. As these were accepted Ngwa'inju received only a severe scolding. He would have to face the consequences alone, he was told, if he went on seducing other girls; his relatives had come to his aid once but would refuse to do so again even if attempts were made to put him to death. Rorombarafa is still single, and as she is now approaching middle age there is little chance that anyone will marry her. The infant was reared by her relatives but died in its second year. Ngwa'inju is married and has a family.

In another case the young man's settlement was actually attacked before compensation was accepted. Adequate preparations for defence had been made and a number of his relatives were there ready to fight. Before blood was shed, however, one of the older men came forward and offered *tafuli'ae* and pigs "to cool the attackers' anger". The guilty couple subsequently married, a most unusual occurrence.

A young man who interfered with the daughter of a *ngwane-inoto* was not so fortunate. A price of ten *tafuli'ae* and one hundred porpoise teeth was put on his head, and he was shot by a famous killer named Suina'o while busy gathering nuts in the branches of a lofty tree. This is the same Suina'o whose economic rivalry with the *ngwane-inoto* Irombaua was mentioned in the last chapter. He is still renowned as the most fearless killer in north Malaita, and in earlier days gave the Administration a considerable amount of trouble.

The relatives on this occasion made no attempt to retaliate. It so happened that the district to which the young man

belonged was small, but even if he had had a great number of kinsfolk vengeance against an injured *ngwane-inoto* would have been far too dangerous to contemplate. The girl developed leprosy soon afterwards, and I was told by several people that this was probably the result of evil magic.

It is worth noting that although the sexual act is supposed to be injurious to health, young men are warned to refrain from intercourse primarily because the consequences of discovery are liable to be fatal. In some families young children are taught to spy on their elder brothers so that the parents can intervene at the slightest suspicion of an intrigue and prevent trouble. A proverbial saying is of interest in this connection—"Have nothing to do with a girl if she solicits you ; she is looking for a father for the child she has already conceived."

Despite the fact that seducers are rarely punished, compounding for the crime of adultery is practically never tolerated : every effort is made to have the wrongdoer killed. His relatives also regard his offence with unsympathetic eyes, and only in very special circumstances is any attempt made to help him escape. This no doubt is one reason why adultery is rare, though the fact that all extra-marital intercourse is regarded as wrong must be taken into consideration, since it prevents men from developing habits of promiscuity when they are young. Adulterous wives are beaten but not as a rule divorced.

The only case I recorded where the adulterer was not killed was that in which the son of a *ngwane-inoto* was involved, and even he did not dare to go about his ordinary work but hid for months in a cave. When the anger of the husband had had time to cool the father offered him twenty-five *tafuli'ae* and several pigs. After these had been accepted the adulterer began to appear in public once more, though he always took the greatest care to avoid the man he had wronged.

I was surprised to find that native husbands are not often suspicious. The reason no doubt is that the strict regulations governing the conduct of a married woman effectively prevent her from having anything to do with any men except her closest relatives unless her husband is present. If he does see her alone with a man he knows at once that she has almost certainly been unfaithful, and vengeance is then, of course, justified.

## THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Redress for wrongs is thus an individual matter ; when one person is injured by another he has to take the law into his own hands. In the case of minor offences the belief in magic provides an innocuous method of redress. The wronged individual simply carries out the appropriate rites and is then satisfied, since he believes he is the cause of the future mishaps and bad luck of his enemy. As this man, on the other hand, knows nothing of what has been done he has no provocation to retaliate.

Serious offences, such as the seduction of an unmarried girl, adultery, sorcery, and murder, however, lead to the employment of more violent methods. The injured parties can depend upon the assistance of their *ngwane-inoto* and other relatives, and the whole group combines to take vengeance on the wrongdoer, usually by putting him to death, though they may be satisfied with compensation, especially in the case of seduction. The difficulty is that although the avengers may consider they have right on their side, their opponents may be unwilling to agree. The upshot then is that a vendetta develops in which the original cause of the trouble is completely forgotten.

The disadvantages of such a system are sufficiently apparent to require no further emphasis—the scales are apt to be far too strongly weighted in favour of the wealthy and the killers. These latter sometimes become a real menace—though in this event they are always in the end speared. Districts are also liable to be pitted against one another for the most trifling causes. Yet it must be borne in mind that only the deaths of socially important people are avenged, and that seduction and adultery are rare. Judicial murders are in consequence by no means as common as might have been expected.

It will be noted that the deterrent and reformatory aspects of punishment, about which we talk so much, are completely disregarded by the native. The thought of unpleasant consequences probably does play some part, however, in preventing persons from injuring their fellows unprovoked. Thus one reason why adultery is so uncommon may well be the fact that it is so severely punished. At the same time, I do not wish to give the impression that the natives

## THE PAST

live in constant terror of their lives, and in particular I would like to contradict the statement, so often repeated in accounts of Melanesian peoples, that fear of sorcery gives them no peace. The menace of sorcery is little more to the people of Malaita than is the penalty of the law to the average European citizen.

Except when a death occurred I never remember sorcery being discussed in ordinary fireside conversations unless I myself asked a question about it, and sometimes for weeks at a time the subject was not mentioned. A wave of fear, it is true, may sweep through the countryside after a death, but it quickly passes, and even when it is at its height one could scarcely say that the people are demoralized by terror. The closest relatives of the dead man, who may be presumed to be most affected, are kept busy, as we shall see in the next chapter, performing the mourning ritual. Other people, however, for a day or two are decidedly jumpy and sit about in groups discussing the matter. Previously arranged visits to distant places are abandoned, and everyone is particularly careful to take a companion if he has to stir from the home-stead. But before a week is over this attack of nerves is overcome, and ordinary work is once more resumed. I was reminded by this of my own reaction to a shipwreck on my first expedition to the Solomons in 1927. I still had to do a considerable amount of travelling by sea and found that for a short period I was most uncomfortable every minute I spent on board ship.<sup>1</sup>

I have headed this chapter "Crime and Punishment", but a more suitable title might perhaps have been "Crime and Vengeance". The native intention when seeking redress is to inflict injury at least equal to the damage the wrongdoer has himself caused. The word used is *ndu'ua*, repayment, but with the idea of giving back the exact equivalent. If a person borrows a basket of taro from a neighbour, *ndu'ua* is only employed if he returns another basket of taro, not if he gives something else of the same value. "Repayment" for a murder is sometimes referred to as *u'ua mbau i mae-lana*,

<sup>1</sup> I would remind the reader once more than I am speaking only of the natives of north Malaita and am not implying that their reactions to sorcery are typical of the peoples of the western Pacific. Dr. Margaret Mead informs me that among the Arspesh of New Guinea, for instance, the thought of sorcery is always present and that the maximum number of precautions is taken all the time.

literally, the lifting up of a banana plant for the death. The murderer has knocked over one of the banana plants of the district, and, by killing him, the relatives restore it to its original position and repair the damage to their orchards. I have also heard vengeance spoken of as thunder following lightning, and nowadays the phrases "answer back" and "make things square" have also been adopted from pidgin English.

In this attitude we have a significant difference from the principles of law which the British Administration aims to instill, a difference which has presented difficulties in the establishment of our conceptions of law in many other colonial territories.

## CHAPTER IV

### RELIGION AND MAGIC

In north Malaita, religion has its focal point in beliefs concerning the relations between the spirits of the dead and their living descendants. The spirits are regarded as a source of supernatural benefits which can be obtained by the due performance of mortuary rites, by the offering of sacrifices, and by the observance of certain taboos. Their favour can also be forfeited by certain infringements of the moral code.

#### MORTUARY RITES

In the mortuary rites there are two essential elements—the formal expression of a grief which is not only genuinely felt in most cases by the closest relatives of the deceased person but is considered as becoming by the society at large, and the offering of marks of respect to the spirit which are held to deserve its gratitude and create a claim on its benevolence.

The relatives always come to express their sympathy when a person is ill and are usually present therefore at the actual death. A sick man is taken to the *mbi'u*, into which women are forbidden to go, but a woman remains in the ordinary dwelling-house.

As soon as the dying person has drawn his last breath all present at once begin to wail. If he has been removed to the *mbi'u* the women, who will have assembled in a house close by, take up this lament and emit piercing shrieks of woe. The men's cries soon cease, but the women continue almost without pause for three days.

The body is buried as quickly as possible. The task of preparing it for the grave is entrusted by the chief mourner—either the brother or the son, or, if a woman has died, the husband—to one or two of the senior men. Women never under any circumstances touch a corpse, not even that of a child. A few hairs, to be used later at the "inquest", are cut from the head, and the body, without even having

been washed, is bound up tightly in mats with the knees drawn under the chin.

The death signal is then given out on the slit-gong—from ten to forty slow beats, the number varying with the social position of the dead person, ten for a child, twenty for a woman, thirty for a man of no importance, and forty for a *ngwane-inoto*.

Immediately afterwards the corpse is placed on a bier roughly fashioned from a few sticks and carried to the nearest cemetery by the menfolk. The actual interment and the digging of the grave, however, are left to the men who wrapped up the body. They place it in a shallow hole lying on its left side so that the face looks towards the place where pigs are killed on the occasions of sacrifice. After the earth has been replaced and flattened down a large boulder is placed on top and a rude shelter erected, "so that the grave will not be washed by the rains until the flesh of the body has decayed". The bundle of hair already referred to is placed in the thatch of this shelter, and the mourning party then returns to the settlement, where in the meantime the women have been loudly weeping.

The lack of ceremony with which burial is carried out is most unusual, especially in Melanesia, where the body is generally elaborately decorated and publicly displayed for at least twenty-four hours. Informants gave two reasons for the speedy disposal, first they were unwilling to allow the sorcerer to look upon the face of the corpse and gloat over his handiwork, and second decomposition is so loathsome that the sooner the body is got rid of the better. "It is a man no longer, not the person we knew; it is filthy and disgusting; therefore we hasten to cover it from sight."

The gravediggers are in a condition called *ambu*, that is set apart or sacred, for a period of ten days, because they have been in contact with the soil of the sacred grove, which is full of the mouldering remains of bodies whose former owners are now spirits. While in this condition they have to remain in seclusion away from women in the *mbi'u*. For the first twenty-four hours they fast, but from then on are permitted to eat food they cook for themselves provided that it has at no time been touched by a woman. On the eleventh day they take a ritual bath and then return once more to normal life.

The other persons who attend the funeral, including the chief mourners, are not *ambu* and prepare a small meal for themselves when they return to the *mbi'u*. Afterwards, before appearing in public, they all smear themselves with ashes as a sign of grief. The closer relatives refrain from bathing, shaving, and cutting the hair for some weeks, but the other mourners bathe after an interval of a couple of days.

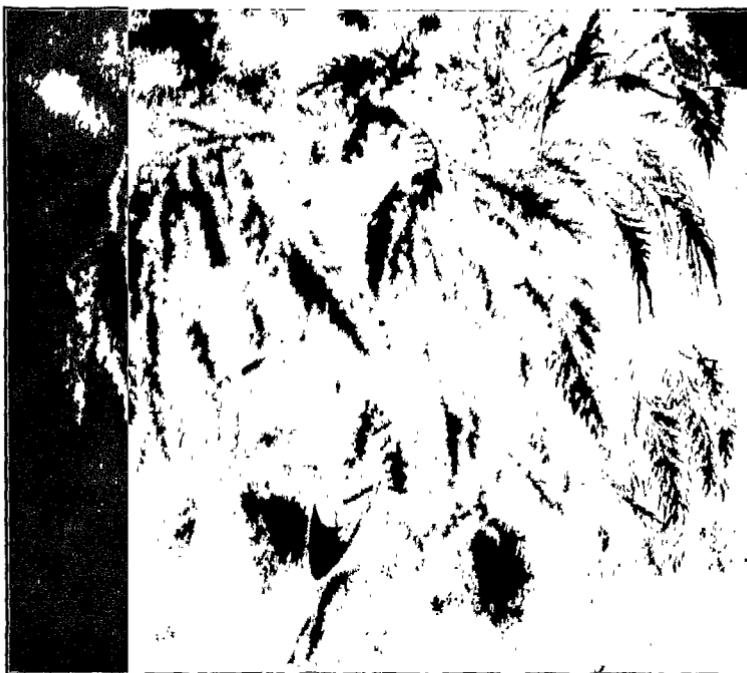
From now until the funeral feast, which takes place on the fourth or fifth day, practically everyone who lives within a radius of about five miles comes to express sympathy, bringing with him gifts of food. The wealthier men also donate *taful'ae* to the chief mourners as contributions to the gift they will have to make the gravediggers. The men sit in silence outside the house where the death occurred, but the women add their voices to the lamentations.

On the third day the bundle of hair is taken from the grave and placed inside the *mbi'u*, where it will remain till the "inquest". Then on the following morning the principal gravedigger has the duty of praying for the first time to the spirit of the dead man, "opening the path", as it is called, so that in future anyone may pray. All the men go to the sacred grove and stand reverently in silence while the gravedigger enters the shelter and addresses the spirit. "The funeral is completed," he says. "Your body has been laid in the ground, and we who remain have lamented and smeared ourselves with filth. To-morrow the funeral feast will be held. We do all this to exalt your reputation. Give us all good health in return and make our crops grow well."

Next day some of the dead man's pigs are killed and his gardens stripped. This food is as usual first displayed, but afterwards distributed amongst those who have come to mourn or express sympathy. Persons who gave contributions of food or *taful'ae* receive a specially large share, and the gravediggers are also given compensation for the discomfort they are suffering.

For the whole of this period and the week following the people who live near the homestead of the dead man abstain from wearing ornaments, from laughing or carrying on loud conversation in public, and from lighting fires in the open. "They like to show the mourners that they also feel sorry," I was told. "But that is not all. If we see a man laughing when we are sorrowing we say to ourselves, 'He is laughing

PLATE XV



THE PRIEST DRESSED READY TO MAKE AN OFFERING.



at me : he rejoices in my sorrow : perhaps his magic caused it.' " In other words, a person who fails to pull a long face when a death occurs is liable to be suspected of sorcery.

If the dead man was married his widow is expected to remain indoors for another week, and during the next few months to keep very much to herself. She avoids the market, for example, and is never present at public gatherings. A widower similarly remains in semi-seclusion for a decent interval after his wife's death.

### SACRIFICES

The ritual of sacrifice has been described in connection with the position of the *ngwane-inoto*. The facts there given indicate that offerings on a large scale—with the subsequent feasts and dances—are the principal method of acquiring social prestige. Though this is fully recognized by native opinion, the ostensible object of the ceremonies is to secure the goodwill of the spirits, and this aim is at least as important to the participants. The same twofold object is pursued throughout the social scale. Those members of the community who are not ambitious or industrious enough to initiate a sacrificial feast and provide the bulk of the pigs required take the opportunity afforded for a display of generosity on a smaller scale, and an act of propitiation towards their own ancestors, by contributing towards the sacrifices organized by their wealthier neighbours.

It is usual to select a single group of ancestors for regular worship, generally those buried in the cemetery closest to where the man lives. A *ngwane-inoto* initiates feasts in honour of this group only, preserving contact with the remainder by making contributions to feasts organized by others. Lesser members of the community similarly make the bulk of their offerings to the ancestors near whose graves they live, with only occasional sacrifices to other spirits. A change is sometimes made if the place of residence is altered, but this in itself, as was mentioned, is of rare occurrence. A man who has been consistently unlucky may also decide to give allegiance to a different set of ancestors.

The offering of a sacrifice always involves the presence of at least one priest, since they alone know the ritual procedure which has to be gone through when the spirits are approached.

Each cemetery has its own priest who has to give his approval before any offering can be made to the spirits of the persons buried there. The office is held by hereditary right, being transmitted from father to son, but is by no means a full-time job, and apart from his special position at ceremonies the priest lives the life of an ordinary man. Several in fact are *ngwane-inoto*.

When sacrifices are made the priest has to wear a large number of leaves, each one of which has some religious significance : in particular, in his armbands and around his waist he has bunches of crimson Cordyline, and on his head pieces of a bracken-like plant (Plate XV). After the pigs are carved he takes the kidneys to a special fireplace and makes his prayer (*fo'a*) to the ancestors while they burn. There is no set formula, but I found in practice that the same expressions are used almost every time. A typical prayer is, " Spirits, here are pigs for you, pigs given by so and so. He gives pigs to his ancestors [and here the names of all the famous persons buried in the cemetery are enumerated]. He makes you gifts of fat pigs, pigs so large that their bellies touch the ground. Eat the pigs he freely gives. He asks for fame [*taloa*, from *talo* = to be spread abroad] and that his name will be spoken by all. Give him strength to overcome his enemies, give him children, give him fruitful gardens, taro, yams, bananas, nuts. Give him litters of pigs, and then he will give more pigs back to you. Give all here present fruitful gardens, children, and many pigs. I call upon you, look after your descendants. These people, make them numerous and give them fame. O ancestors hear my call ! We shall dance for you to see, and you will feel good when you watch us. Our ancestors, our grandparents, our fathers, help us ! You have power, help us. Hold us in your arms, suckle us, nurse us, stand behind us lest we fall. Cover us up with your power so that we do not die through sorcery. We give you pigs, we dance for you ; protect us with your power,"—and so forth.

The underlying idea of this plea for protection is that the spirits should treat their worshippers as a parent does his child. Such words as *fa'a-susua*, to suckle, *to'ombi*, to nurse, and *mbeta-sulia*, to look after children, are almost always employed. Great stress is also laid on the request for the spirits to cover (*thufi*) their descendants, thereby protecting

them from sorcery. "When you have something you do not want others to see you cover it with your hand," explained an informant. "That is how the spirits cover us. So I believe, but some men also say they cover us with their bodies, like a fence overhangs [leans over] the garden to keep out the pigs."

Offerings are given, it is said, "*fa'a-le'aa akalo*," to make the spirits (*akalo*) pleased or well disposed. The expression is not a common one and so far as I know is used otherwise only when legitimate compensation for injury is demanded. A *taful'ae* may then be handed over (to) *fa'a-le'aa* the person concerned and so avert punishment. Spirits to whom offerings have not been made are said to be *ngwaundila*, the word used for a person's feelings when he has asked a neighbour for some object he knows the man possesses and been refused.

A statement of one of my informants throws an interesting light on the relations between the *akalo* and their worshippers. "It is like the market," he said. "On the beach you have seen us exchange [*usia*] taro for fish. In the hills we carry out funeral rites, sacrifices, and dances to please the *akalo*. We exchange weeping, pigs, and dancing for their goodwill. Then they give us what we ask." Just as in theory people do not weep because they are sorry, so also they do not dance for enjoyment : they weep and rejoice only to please the spirits.

Several times I heard people say after a sacrifice that now their affairs would progress satisfactorily. "The spirits are pleased," Faialatha told me. "They will hear the priest's prayer. Our taro and yams will grow, our pigs will multiply, there will be many children, and we shall not fall sick." He did not add that the spirits would help him to become a *ngwane-inoto*, but that is what he may have thought. Other people emphasized the fact that after a sacrifice nobody would die, since the *akalo* would protect everyone from sorcery.

When discussing the dance in an earlier chapter I mentioned that one of the supposed effects is to make people feel so happy that they have no wish to quarrel with one another. Harmony is also believed to be achieved, and for the same reason, by sacrifices. As Faialatha again explained, "We hold a sacrifice : afterwards we have good taro and many

pigs, we have much to eat, large families, and no sickness. There are no bad happenings, and we are content. A man who is content does not squabble." "Like white men, we fight when our affairs go badly," added someone. " You know well that the captain wants to fight the crew when the sea is rough. The wind makes his belly badly disposed. When the sea is calm he laughs with everybody. We are like that. If our taro dies or a relative falls sick we begin quarrelling." I am not persuaded that disputes do cease after a sacrifice, but the important point, again, is that the natives themselves are convinced that there will be peace.

In addition to these big sacrifices, smaller offerings are made to secure particular benefits, such as the recovery of someone who is ill, the success of a crop which appears to be doing badly, or the safety of a raiding party.

If a person is ill and magic has been tried in vain the relatives may take a small pig, or if this is unobtainable a fish, to the priest with a request that he will offer it to the immediate ancestors, perhaps the father and grandfather of the sick man, in the hope that they will use their influence to overcome the disease. A piece of the offering is burnt, but the major portion is eaten by the priest. The ceremony has the effect of reassuring the sick man by making him think that the spirits are now working on his behalf. Medical science assures us that the mental state of the patient does contribute towards his recovery, and one may presume that a sacrifice on such an occasion is entirely beneficial. Certainly I have on two occasions myself observed that persons who seemed grievously ill appeared to take courage once more after an offering had been made. One of them kept on repeating to himself, "Now I shall be well soon,"—and within a fortnight he was able to leave his bed. The renewal of hope in the relatives was also most marked.

The spirits to whom sacrifices are offered before a raid differ from those hitherto considered in that they are not supposed to have been associated with human beings. They have always been spirits, but are thought to possess the power, nevertheless, of becoming incarnate, in some cases in the form of eagles, in some of snakes, and in others of small hairy creatures, known as *ambu-uru*, in appearance rather like babies. Each one of these spirits has a shrine in some sacred grove, but they are without priests.

Before a raid is undertaken the leader of the expedition visits one of these shrines and offers not a pig but some of the bones preserved in the *mbi'u* from previous feasts, praying as he does so that strength (*sukwa'ia*) will be put into his body. Aningali, my informant, who was once a famous killer, told me that he had often felt this *sukwa'ia* rushing into him like a strong wind. He began to tremble, and his skin felt as if needles were being stuck into it, and sometimes his face was wet with tears. Occasionally, he said, *sukwa'ia* was not vouchsafed, and the expedition had then to be abandoned. But if the leader felt it himself he knew that the spirit would aid him and that his party would be safe. He ran back to his assembled warriors and exhorted them to have no fear, whereupon they all felt the same power rushing into them. Their terrors were banished, conquered by the courage of the spirits. "Who lives? Who dies? They say it is no matter if the enemy is slain. But a man who truly has *sukwa'ia* will not die. He knows he cannot even be wounded."

After the fight the leader places a bloody spear in the shrine as an offering and announces the victory, telling the spirit that as its power was exerted its name in consequence has been exalted (*fa'a-mbaitea*) and spread abroad. By this time the *sukwa'ia* has oozed away leaving emptiness in its place, and every one is therefore ravenously hungry.

The aim of all these ceremonies, it is clear, is to make the future sure, and native statements, which I see no reason to doubt, would lead us to conclude that they themselves genuinely believe that this is always achieved, so that the probability is that sacrifices have the effect of implanting feelings of confidence and security.

Except when his affairs are in a really serious condition it is part of the fundamental make-up of the native, no less than of ourselves, that he should be imbued with hope in the future. But there are also recurrent doubts—perhaps after all there will be a disaster. Sacrifices bring this hope to the surface and play a searchlight upon it, thereby throwing doubts into even deeper gloom. The people are thus reassured that everything will be satisfactory, that it *must* be. Traces of fear may perhaps linger on, but they are now insignificant alongside strengthened optimism.

Feelings of confidence and security are of tremendous

importance in a community where the store of knowledge is so small and the means of modifying the environment so slight, and where life in consequence is uncertain. Everyone now uses all his abilities in the endeavour to complete what he undertakes, with the result that he often is successful.

The big sacrifices relate to life in general : the small ones are concerned with particular situations in which, since the issue is very much in doubt, fears are most likely to become paramount. Thus when a person is ill very little of practical value can be done, and there is always a risk that he may die. In agriculture, similarly, no real measures can be taken against insect pests, plant diseases, and unfavourable weather, and many crops are either destroyed or else wither in the ground. In raiding there is also no guarantee that the objective will be gained or that the warriors will return alive.

The belief in the efficacy of sacrifice thus helps to urge on the fighters in the battle of life—and to the native life is far more of a battle than it is to most of us.

#### THE SPIRITS OF THE DEAD AND THEIR POWERS

The spirits which are supposed to have such a profound influence on human affairs are called *akalo*. But every dead person is associated, in addition, with two other spirits, called respectively *ano-na* (or *ano'endo*) and the *mango-na*. All three are normally invisible, but the *ano-na*, though lacking power to do serious harm, sometimes frightens people by appearing at night on lonely roads or in dark unpleasant places. This spirit thus corresponds in some ways with what we call a ghost. The *mango-na*, on the other hand, resembles the Christian soul. It is associated with the breath, which ceases at death, and after the burial of the body passes to the spirit land, located on an island named Anonggwau (Ramos on European charts), half way between Malaita and Ysabel, where it leads a life which is a pale replica of that of mortals.

With the *akalo* there is no such parallel. It is supposed to remain near the sacred grove but somehow to become aware of all that goes on, even to the extent of knowing hidden motives for conduct. Its influence is exerted on mortals through the operation of a power it possesses, to

which a special name, *mamanaa*, related to the common Oceanic word *mana*, is given. This power has no single ultimate source ; it is simply an attribute of all spirits, like their invisibility. It increases in strength with the passing years until the man has been dead for about six or seven generations, when it begins gradually to wane. The more important a man was in life the greater his *mamanaa* is supposed to be after his death, and if he was a distinguished *ngwane-inoto* then it is very great indeed.

The concerns of the living are believed to prosper only by virtue of the *mamanaa* which the sprits exert on their behalf. While ability and hard work are never disregarded, a man's success is always attributed ultimately to the favour of his ancestors and other spirits. The natives are prepared to admit that an incompetent gardener cannot have good crops, and if an improvident person excuses himself by saying that the spirits have not helped him other people are at pains to explain that the true cause of his poverty is to be sought rather in his own laziness. But if of two men, both equally energetic, one prospers while the other is unsuccessful the reason given will be that the spirits are using their *mamanaa* to favour one while they withhold it from the other.

The material presented in the preceding sections of this chapter may have given the impression that the *akalo* are regarded as unfriendly beings who have to be placated. This is not so, and in practice they are looked upon as more or less neutral, using *mamanaa* for the benefit of those who make them gifts and withholding it, with disastrous results, from those who do not. Individuals may, indeed, consider that their sacrifices have not been duly requited, but in such cases their neighbours are usually able to ascribe the misfortunes to past neglect.

I have on two or three occasions heard people say that the *akalo* are like "poisoned" arrows.<sup>1</sup> If one of these is shot at an enemy he is sure to die, but the warrior has also to take care that it should not pierce his own skin and cause death. "The *akalo* are like that. If treated becomingly they give their *mamanaa* ; if treated carelessly they cause pain and death."

<sup>1</sup> Arrows are not in fact poisoned but treated with a preparation which is supposed to make them magically potent.

## THE PAST

## MAMANAA AND CONDUCT

The *akalo* are provoked by certain offences, notably the murder of a relative and a breach of the prohibition against extra-marital intercourse, to withdraw their *mamanaa*, leaving the guilty person without protection against sorcery.

The murder of a relative is spoken of as a *fualangaa*, literally, a big thing. Practically all deaths, as we know already, are attributed to sorcery, and if vengeance is to be carried out an "inquest" is held to establish the identity of the man responsible. Now it sometimes happens that the person on whom the guilt falls is a kinsman both of his supposed victim and of the man's closest relatives, perhaps even a member of the same district group. These people are placed in a serious dilemma arising from the conflict of two social principles, (a) that sorcery must be avenged and (b) that the life of a kinsman must be respected. One norm of conduct, that is to say, obliges them to seek revenge, and another norm, equally accepted, says that they must not kill the person whom they believe to be guilty. The belief that the spirits will punish the offender provides a loophole of escape from this difficult situation. Responsibility for vengeance is shifted, and the relatives rest content in the knowledge that the *akalo* will make the wrongdoer expiate his *fualangaa* even if they themselves fail to punish him.

In spite of this ideal solution of the problem, however, the dead man's family may not be prepared to wait, especially if he was a *ngwane-inoto*, or if they have additional reasons for hating the sorcerer. They then carry out vengeance themselves, thereby also committing a *fualangaa*. A ceremony is performed afterwards in an endeavour to avert the anger of the spirits, but this is by no means invariably successful, especially if the kinship tie between the killers and the sorcerer was a close one.

The ceremony, known as *thuma*, consists first of a confession of the fault to a priest and an admission that wrong has been done. Killers and priest then go together to a cemetery, where he announces to the *akalo* that confession has taken place and asks for forgiveness. A special kind of bone is then buried in the grove both as an offering and a symbol that the murder has also been buried and forgotten.

A few days later the wrongdoers present the priest with a

small pig, which he offers to the spirits. A portion he eats, but the bulk is thrown into the sacred grove. As he eats he prays again for the forgiveness of the killers and asks that *mamanaa* be exerted once more on their behalf, so that they may be protected from the possible vengeance of the sorcerer's family. A month or two later a big sacrifice is made and a dance held. If in spite of this the wrongdoers do become ill the spirits are supposed to be still angry.

In the case of extra-marital intercourse it is only the woman who is punished by the withdrawal of *mamanaa*. Seducers and adulterers, it will be remembered, are punished directly by the persons they have injured. A single girl can secure the favour of the *akalo* once more by telling her future husband the name of her secret lover just before marriage. The husband demands a *tafuli'ae* from him and tells him to avoid the girl in future. An unfaithful wife can also avoid the consequences if she confesses the name of the adulterer so that vengeance may be taken upon him.

A woman with a guilty secret suffers for her sin in childbirth, when, since the spirits are angry with her, labour is always both painful and prolonged. It is said that if she continues to deny her fault both she herself and the infant will die. All deaths in childbirth—and the maternal mortality rate is high—are attributed to this cause, even when the woman protests her innocence to the end. I believe that in many cases she really is innocent, for I am convinced that adultery is rare.

A third class of actions leading to supernatural punishment is in a rather different category, since it is concerned with the treatment of places and things held to be sacred. Everything connected with the spirits is said to be *ambu*, the local form of the more generally known Polynesian word *tapu* or *taboo*, and must be approached with great respect. For this reason no one ever goes near a sacred grove unless a burial or sacrifice is taking place, and even then care is exercised. Thus mourners and those who have attended sacrifices sleep alone for at least one night and do no work for two days. It is on this account also that the priest has to make all the offerings : other people are unaware of the correct ritual method of addressing spirits. After taking part in a sacrifice the priest is always *ambu* and therefore has to remain in semi-seclusion until the effects of his dealings

with the supernatural have worn away. The gravedigger is also in this condition, since he has dug the sacred earth. If precautions are neglected the *akalo* withdraw their *mamanaa* not only from the offenders but also from all those with whom they come in contact.

Faint traces of sacredness, the remains of contacts with the spirits at sacrifices, dances, and burials, are supposed to linger about men always. This is scarcely an explicit dogma, certainly, but two or three informants advanced it independently as an explanation of why men live apart from their wives. "You ask me why a married couple have two houses ?" said one of them. "It is the sacredness. Women do not have dealings with the spirits : they are never *ambu*. Men make sacrifices and attend burials : they are a little *ambu* all the time." Asked what he meant by "a little *ambu*", he went on : "It is like this. I chew betel-nut four times, five times in a day, but my teeth are always black. Or better than that. Look, my friend, you have heard what we say amongst ourselves when you come and visit us. As you came along to-day my wife said, 'The smell of the white man !' You bath yourself with soap in the morning, and now at noon you still smell of soap."

At the opposite pole from sacred things are those held to be *sua*. This word may be translated as defiled or ritually unclean, though to the native it conveys no idea of actual dirt. Just as sacredness is focused around the spirits, so uncleanness is associated primarily with the blood of menstruation and childbirth. Further, a person who has come into contact with something regarded as *sua* is also under the obligation of taking special precautions before mixing with other people. Women during their periods and after they have given birth to an infant accordingly withdraw from all social life and retire to a hut in the bush. At such times even their drinking water has to be drawn from a separate supply lest that of other people should be contaminated. Physical contact of any kind with a woman who is *sua* leads it is thought to instant loss of *mamanaa*, and if a man is sufficiently foolish as to have intercourse with his wife while she is menstruating nothing can save him from death.

At ordinary times women are not exactly *sua*, any more than men are precisely *ambu*, but owing to their frequent

contact with menstrual blood it is thought that they are never in a condition in which it would be safe for them to have anything to do with sacred things. An inquiry as to why women never enter a cemetery is always met with either, "Because of the blood," or "Because of their uncleanness [*suaas*]." A woman who took part in a sacrifice or handled a corpse would at once lose the benefit of *mamanaa*, and I often heard the story of how a widow in abandonment of grief committed suicide by following her husband's body to the grave. (Yet even this death was ascribed to sorcery : loss of *mamanaa* was not enough.)

This faint ritual uncleanness which lingers around women is given as the reason why a portion of the dwelling house is exclusively theirs.<sup>1</sup> "The spirits are *ambu*, men are *ambu*, the *mbi'u* is *ambu*; menstrual blood is *sua*, women are *sua*, the 'bottom' of the house is *sua*."

The spirits thus reinforce the generally accepted theory that the sexes are best kept apart. "Men one separate path, women one separate path ; that is good. Men and women one path only ; that is not good,"—though the path referred to is metaphorical only. This theory finds its most active expression in the belief that sexual intercourse is fraught with danger, especially to men. Husbands lie with their wives only during the hours of darkness, and before morning always return to the *mbi'u*, though even then their strength is thought to have been seriously impaired. Young husbands, who may be expected to have spent many nights at the side of their wives, are accordingly never asked to join in raiding expeditions. Those who do plan to go remain apart for a few days beforehand, being careful also to refrain from eating food which women have handled.

The four reasons ascribed by native opinion then for the anger of the spirits are the murder of a relative, illicit intercourse on the part of a woman, any action which brings the sacred and profane into contact, and encroachment on the domain traditionally associated with the opposite sex. It is obvious that this supernatural anger is in fact the reflection of the disapproval of the community, which is in turn accentuated by its supposed manifestations. In offences of the first two types circumstances preclude the infliction of direct punishment, and this belief serves to satisfy the

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* above, p. 18.

community at large that the sin will nevertheless be visited on the offender, as well as providing a possible deterrent influence.

It is of interest to note the various meanings attached to the word *ambu*. Several natives distinguished these as "the first", "the second", and "the third", and one man, using a parallel with kinship terms to make himself clearer, spoke of "the true", "the second", and "the close". The use of the word in contexts where it must be translated as "sacred" or "connected with the spirits" is said to be "the first" or "true" meaning, and its application to actions which have been mentioned as particularly displeasing to the spirits is described as "the second". In addition it is employed in a general sense to refer to any conduct which is forbidden. I have already indicated that in this final wide sense it plays an important part in the training of infants.<sup>1</sup>

#### RELIGION AND SOCIAL LIFE

The Malaita religious system may be regarded as the driving force of the whole culture. In the first place, being built up on the natives' incurable optimism, it assures them that although the world may be full of difficulties and dangers, they do not stand alone, since all around are supernatural forces which may be utilized for their advantage. Instead of acquiescing in their futility and weakness they therefore struggle on and achieve their objective. Then in the second place, it has the effect of reinforcing accepted ideas of right and wrong; it backs up the moral code and helps to ensure that people will follow what are regarded as the correct modes of conduct.

My neglect of mythology, which in many primitive and most advanced societies serves as a systematic background for dogma and ceremony, will probably have caused some surprise. The reason is simple: Malaita is without religious myths of any kind. This lack is common in some other parts of Melanesia, and as explanation the rapid decay of the hot damp climate has been offered. "The memory of the past perishes quickly where all things soon pass away," says one writer, "where every building soon decays, where life is

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* above, p. 35.

short, and no marked change of season makes people count by longer measures of time than months."<sup>1</sup> This may be so, but I suggest that even more important is the fact that the community as a whole is not united in the worship of the same gods. The only religious uniformity is the manner in which each group worships its own ancestors. The genealogies of these ancestors, since they provide a sanction for the performance of ceremonies, in a sense take the place of myths.

### MAGIC

Reference has been made in earlier chapters to magical ceremonies carried out either to bring about special events or else to prevent their occurrence. Thus when an orchard is to be protected magic is carried out with the object of causing thieves to be afflicted with disease. Similarly, magic is resorted to in cases of illness to bring about recovery. Rites of this type are carried out in every activity where danger is involved or where the issue is in doubt. In addition to the sacrifice before a raid, for example, there is also magic to make the warriors strong, fleet of foot, and invisible to their enemies, and these in turn sluggish and weak. Correspondingly, in agriculture there are rites to drive away insect pests and to bring rain in time of droughts or sun after floods. Magic is also performed to prevent quarrels at big gatherings, to cause a man's dancing to be admired, to persuade a particular girl to receive her lover's advances favourably, to afflict enemies with all sorts of misfortunes, and so forth.

I have selected for description two magical rites, first that carried out to cause a mist to hide a raiding party from their enemies, and second that performed by a lover to make his sweetheart accept his advances.

In the magic for mist a branch is cut from a tree with dark green leaves. The leader of the party, gnashing his teeth and grimacing terribly, then breaks off a twig and waves it backwards and forwards in front of him as he recites the following spell.

<sup>1</sup> R. H. Codrington, *The Melanesians, their Anthropology and Folklore*, Oxford, 1891, p. 47.

" One utter darkness, two utter darknesses, three utter  
 darknesses, four utter darknesses.  
 Mist of utter darkness,  
 Darkness for murder.  
 Darkness of a shady glade,  
 Darkness for killing.  
 Darkness of the ground beneath the undergrowth,  
 Darkness for death by violence.  
 Mist of Ha'aro.  
 Thambulukwai, Thafuli'au, Thauakara, Take'eto'a,  
 Thaa'ama,  
*Oke mama-mamana.*"

On finishing the exhortation he blows on the twig, which he then ties in his necklace, allowing it to hang down his back. The party follows his example, each person breaking off a twig for himself.

The pantomime is supposed to be in imitation of the movements of the attacking party. A branch with dark green leaves is selected on account of their resemblance, superficial though it is, with the mist and darkness the magic aims at producing. In the same way, dark places are mentioned with the idea that their gloom may extend everywhere. The spell, it will be noted, refers to the darkness as though it had already appeared. Ha'aro is the sacred grove where offerings are customarily made to Thambulukwai, the person who used the magic first, and the other names are those of men who have subsequently known it. *Oke* is an imperative prefix, and *mama-mamana* the intensive verbal form of *mamanaa*. The last line, actually an address to the spirits mentioned, can therefore be translated, " Make [this magic] effective through the operation of your power."

The seat of the memory is supposed to lie in the chest, so that a man's magic is always stored up there. When using it he therefore has to breathe hard, or sometimes spit, to make sure that it will come forth in all its strength.

Love magic conforms in essentials to the same general pattern. In one example, for instance, the young man murmurs a spell while with one hand he holds a white sweet-smelling flower, frequently used as a decoration for the hair or body, and with the other pretends to stroke the girl's body. The spell is as follows.

"The parrakeet weeps for its mate;  
 So and so [naming the girl] weeps, weeps for me.  
 She cries for my basket, cries for my kinsfolk.  
 Cries for my house, cries for my pigs, cries to see me walk;  
 My gardens, she cries for them.  
 The parrakeet cries in Lamboma grove,  
 Waitalau, Ramokakai, Maetofana.

"The parrakeet is friendly disposed towards me;  
 So and so is friendly disposed towards me.  
 Friendly disposed towards my basket, towards my kinsfolk,  
 Towards my house, towards my pigs, towards my walking;  
 My gardens, she is friendly disposed towards them.  
 The parrakeet is friendly disposed in Lamboma grove,  
 Waitalau, Ramokakai, Maetofana,  
*Oke mama-mamana.*"

He then breathes hard on the flower and afterwards persuades someone to present it to the girl.

Lamboma, again, is a grove where Waitalau, the original owner of the magic, is worshipped, and the other names are those of persons who have subsequently used it.

These examples are in all respects typical. The essential ingredients of magic are leaves or other substances chosen on account of a real or fancied resemblance with the effect desired, a pantomime or similar series of actions imitating this effect, and a spell abounding in similes or metaphors stating that it has already been achieved. The leaves are always breathed or spat upon, thus becoming the vehicle through which the magic works, and then placed in close contact with the object or person to be influenced. In magic to cure dysentery, for instance, red leaves are bespelled and soaked in water which the patient has to drink in order to replace the red blood he has lost. It will be remembered that leaves from a tree which sheds its foliage are similarly employed in the magic to cure dropsy.

By far the most important part of the magic is the spell, and the same word, *akaloa* (from *akalo*), is in fact used for both. All spells are supposed to have been revealed in dreams to the ancestors by forefathers still more remote, and their effectiveness is supposed to depend on the accuracy with which they are repeated. The tag at the end, however transforms them into prayers to the spirits of the persons named, asking them to bring about the desired aim with

their *mamanaa*. Ancestors are sometimes addressed in prayers made up on the spur of the moment if a person is ignorant of a magical formula, but the results are then by no means so certain, "since those words were not used by the ancestors to whom he speaks." Prayers in such circumstances, in other words, lack the authority of tradition, whereas spells are sanctified by long use. The list of the names of the men who have used the magic is believed to be proof of its efficacy ; if the spells had been found to be useless they would never have been handed down through the generations. "We name the *akalo* : the magic was true for them : it will be true for us," I was told.

In spite of this appeal to the ancestors, the natives imagine that magic is practically automatic in action. They may be prepared to admit that the request will be refused if the ancestors are displeased, but in practice behave as though the rite can be depended upon without question. Excuses given for failures are faulty recitation of the spell and counter magic performed by an enemy, never anger of the spirits. Magic is regarded, that is to say, as a means of coercing the spirits to use their *mamanaa* for the benefit of mankind.

The resemblance between magical rites and sacrifices is sufficiently obvious : both make promises of a satisfactory future. Certain types of magic, by providing for the details of a general situation, actually serve to supplement the smaller sacrifices. But, considered as a whole, magic is more than this.

As Professor Malinowski has pointed out, when anyone, savage or civilized, finds what he wants difficult to attain, instead of giving up in despair he is driven by his emotions to substitute activities, which give him a certain satisfaction in themselves.<sup>1</sup> The angry man dominated by thwarted hate finds relief in clenching his fists and muttering imprecations, the diffident lover slakes his passion by pressing his charmer to his breast in imagination and stroking her smooth flesh, and a person in danger wards off the demons created by his fear with an over-stalwart demeanour. To all this magic is closely allied. In spells to cause illness, for example, the magician has often to curse his enemy and go through the pantomime of stabbing him, in love magic the girl is addressed

<sup>1</sup> B. Malinowski, "Magic, Science, and Religion," *Science, Religion and Reality* (ed. J. Needham), London, 1925.

as if she were present and the motions of caressing her gone through, and in magic to make warriors strong they have to grimace and gnash their teeth. The assumption is that magic is a formalized substitute activity, the crystallization of emotional day-dreaming, which gives a similar satisfaction when strong desires seem difficult of attainment.



**PART II**  
**THE PRESENT**

"Proud man,  
Drest in a little brief authority,  
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,  
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As make the angels weep."

*Measure for Measure*, Act II, Scene 2.

## CHAPTER V

### DEPOPULATION

We now know what native life was like in Malaita before the coming of the white man. I have explained already that in some settlements it remains practically unaltered, and the account was in fact based almost entirely on what I was able to observe myself. In most areas, however, Western civilization has made profound changes, and my aim now is to examine how the aboriginal culture has been modified in consequence.

Everyone who has the smallest acquaintance with the literature of the Pacific is familiar with one at least of the effects of contact with the outside world, depopulation—and it will be best to clear the ground therefore by dealing with this subject first.

#### PRE-EUROPEAN DECLINE

Vital statistics are lacking, but contemporary reports by visiting navigators and native statements all seem to indicate that the people of Malaita were diminishing steadily from the time of the first blackbirders until about 1925. This is in line with what we know to have occurred elsewhere, and so general, indeed, was the decline that many believe that the Pacific Islanders were already a vanishing race before our arrival: contact, they assert, merely hastened a process which had begun long before.

This theory receives its fullest expression in Professor Robert's *Population Problems of the Pacific*.<sup>1</sup> From statements of early visitors he comes to the conclusion that "the ordinary native was cruel, cowardly, ungrateful, and of an intense and vengeful malignity". "There was little, if any, care for the sick, and the maternal instinct, in Polynesia at least, seemed

<sup>1</sup> S. H. Roberts, *Population Problems of the Pacific*, London, 1927, pp. 28–32, 58–62.

to be almost non-existent." From a study of the legends he also finds that "superstition, cruelty, and immorality" had all increased in the century before the coming of the Europeans. The culture, in fact, was rotten to the core; "there was a general decline, an indefinable *malaise* in the stock itself."

The material presented in the first part of this book will have amply demonstrated that these generalizations are without foundation and can only have been based on a misunderstanding of the natives and their mode of life. As for the credence Professor Roberts gives to the legends, one is almost tempted to wonder whether he would be prepared to accept the account of the Creation in the Book of Genesis as a statement of scientific fact.

He goes on to say that the people "luxuriated in tropical islands where life was too easy and nature was too bountiful". "The stamina had gone from the race . . . all was supine and nerveless . . . the race, denied the health-giving process of selection, was giving way." Yet elsewhere we are told that everyone lived in constant dread and fear for his life, and that as there were continual wars no one was safe.

Even if these statements were true it would by no means follow that the population was decreasing. Cowardice has no necessary connection with mortality, and fertility is not apparently affected by "superstition".

Roberts also states that "the abasement of women, the physical results of cannibalism and other things predisposed the bodies of the natives to certain diseases". It is difficult to see why the consumption of human flesh, which, in any case, is by no means universal, should be a cause of disease; and it would be necessary to understand more clearly what is meant by "the abasement of women" before the relation of this with the spread of sickness could be discussed. In point of fact the position of women in most parts of the Pacific could not be called one of abasement.<sup>1</sup>

There is really no evidence that depopulation had begun before the arrival of the white man in the islands, so that we may reasonably assume that it has been directly due to European contact.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide*, for example, B. Malinowski, *Sexual Life of Savages in North-West Melanesia*, London, 1929, *passim*; and C. H. Wedgwood, "Women in Manam," *Oceania*, vol. viii, pp. 401-428; vol. viii, pp. 170-192.

## THE INCREASING DEATH RATE

The fallacy of deducing probable trends of population merely from a consideration of crude birth and death rates has been pointed out many times. Variations in the mortality rate of the aged are ultimately irrelevant, so that what is required is the increase or decrease of persons capable of reproduction.<sup>1</sup> This information is not always available for European countries, and in the South Seas the records are still less adequate. The first census of Malaita was not completed till 1931, and even now only the figure for the total population in this and subsequent years has been published.<sup>2</sup> There is thus no means of finding out the sex or age composition of the population, and I shall be forced to confine myself to an examination of the factors which may (*a*) have caused an increase in the death rates of the young and middle aged, or (*b*) have lowered the birth rate.

In my own opinion the principal cause of depopulation has been introduced diseases, which have raised the death rate for all ages.

From a study of early records I gather that the first sicknesses to be brought to the Solomons were smallpox and dysentery, and a series of epidemics decimated the population between the years 1870 and 1900. Since then there have also been periodic outbreaks of chicken-pox, whooping cough, measles, and influenza. I have been in a native community myself during two severe epidemics, and the results on both occasions were appalling. No precautions were taken against the spread of infection, and once a person became ill his only chance of recovery was that his natural resistance would triumph, though even this was often partially destroyed through lack of proper nursing and suitable foods.

Several new diseases, such as gonorrhoea,<sup>3</sup> tuberculosis, dysentery, and leprosy have also become endemic. Syphilis is missing from the list not through any merit of ours, but because in the Pacific it does not flourish side by side with yaws, a "native" disease which has always been common. The effects of tuberculosis in a hot damp climate, where

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* E. Charles, *The Twilight of Parenthood*, London, 1934, chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> *British Solomon Islands Blue Book*, Suva, published annually.

<sup>3</sup> Malaita is in this respect fortunate : the senior medical officer of the Protectorate tells me that gonorrhoea is not prevalent there.

people habitually spit in the dark corners of the house, are devastating.<sup>1</sup>

An additional reason why introduced diseases are so fatal is that native health has been already undermined by the old complaints, such as yaws, malaria, and hookworm, all of which are universal. Children usually contract yaws early in life, and if they are still in the first year it generally causes death almost at once. Malaria is also contracted in infancy, with the result that the spleen becomes permanently enlarged. (This fact, and the prevalence of hookworm, accounts for the pot-bellies so noticeable in the photographs of native children.) Even if a person survives these diseases he is very much weakened and often unable to withstand a new infection, especially when it is one to which the stock, through centuries of isolation, has developed no immunity.

The diet, again, renders the natives more susceptible to the diseases introduced by Europeans. Though adequate in quantity, it is often sadly lacking in quality and balance, and the supply of certain essential vitamins is particularly scanty. Dr. Strong, medical officer of the Territory of Papua, states, for instance, that influenza epidemics are always more serious after a drought, when vegetables are scarce, and he even claims to have prevented outbreaks of tuberculosis by supplying good nourishing food.<sup>2</sup> I shall speak of the diet of indentured labourers later, but it is worth noting now that beri-beri, a disease directly due to vitamin deficiency, was reported on Solomon Island plantations as late as 1937.

If the ordinary death rate is described as high, the mortality of infants is enormous, a fact which is scarcely surprising when one recalls the conditions under which parturition takes place. Antiseptics are everywhere unknown, and in Malaita there are not even midwives. The food given to the babe is also at times quite unsuitable.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At a medical examination of the natives of Ontong Java, conducted in my presence in 1928, 10 per cent of the adults were definitely tubercular. (*Vide H. I. Hogbin, "Depopulation in Ontong Java," Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol. xxxix, pp. 43-66.)

<sup>2</sup> "Report of the Sydney Meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, August, 1932," *Oceania*, vol. iii, p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> It is significant that in six families selected at random from my genealogies nearly 20 per cent of the children recorded died in infancy. I found that as a rule no mention was made of still-born children, so that this figure may possibly be too low. Unfortunately I have now no way of finding out whether these families are typical.

PLATE XVI



READY FOR CHURCH

(These photographs were taken in Guadalcanal)

[Facing p. 128]

Deliberate killing of infants, however, was never a common practice in Malaita, and, although one cannot be certain, it is probably carried out with no greater frequency to-day. I was told that in former times the mother allowed the baby to suffocate only if it was in any way defective, or if she already had a large family. The Administration looks upon child killing as murder, but I have never heard of any accusations having been made.

Other suggested causes of an increase in the death rate are alcohol, fire-arms, and European clothing. The first two have been prohibited in the Solomons for many years, though in the early days possession of muskets certainly led to bitter feuds. Clothes, however, are still a source of danger. In a tropical climate the bare minimum, a loincloth, is sufficient, but traders encourage the sale of shirts and dresses, and some missionaries—though by no means all—insist that they be worn for the sake of decency (Plate XVI). If the people were given soap and urged to wash the garments this would not matter, but at present many of them do not remove clothing till it is a network of rags, doubtless harbouring all sorts of infection.

The position in the Solomons in this respect is fortunately not as serious as in some other islands. The uniform of the native armed constabulary consists simply of a khaki loincloth and cummerbund, which are regarded by all as exceptionally smart (Plate XVII), and the police in consequence have become the glass of fashion for the whole community. In the Territory of New Guinea, on the other hand, the police wear silly caps and ridiculous tunics which are so cumbersome that they have to be removed when serious work is performed. The Territory of Papua has a Sumptuary Regulation expressly forbidding upper garments, though here again the police wear heavy tunics.

#### THE DIMINISHING BIRTH RATE

In the Pacific, as in primitive communities elsewhere, the birth rate was always limited by the prohibition on sexual intercourse enjoined on the parents during the suckling period. Of the three factors which now combine to reduce it, the spread of gonorrhoea, the employment of young men of marriageable age on plantations, and the suppression of

Polygamy, none has made itself felt in Malaita to any marked extent. Gonorrhoea is uncommon, marriage has never taken place until about the twenty-sixth year, by which time most of the young men are home again, and polygamy was always limited to the wealthy.

Sir Raphael Climento has stated that in certain parts of the Pacific fertility has been affected by the substitution of tinned foods for the old garnishes, such as the growing shoots of plants and spore-bearing ferns, the chief source of vitamin E, on which fertility depends.<sup>1</sup> In Malaita this is not so, and, except on plantations, native diet is the same as it always was : the old foods, cooked in the same old ways, are still eaten.

Another authority, G. H. L.-F. Pitt-Rivers, lays great stress on increasing masculinity as a cause of the reduction of the birth rate.<sup>2</sup> The high sex ratio means that some men have to go without wives, so that promiscuity increases, a condition, he suggests, which renders many women incapable of conceiving. I am assured by physiologists, however, that there is no proof of a causal connection between promiscuity and sterility. In Malaita, moreover, there is no reason to suppose that the proportion of males to the total population has in any way changed during recent years—indeed, there are no figures to show whether males are in excess of females—and the majority of women are still virgins at the time of their marriage.

Another suggestion is that sterility has resulted from inbreeding. Such writers as Speiser<sup>3</sup> and Baker,<sup>4</sup> in endeavouring to show that this is not true, point out that inbreeding is prevented in primitive societies by rules of exogamy. In this they are mistaken ; such rules do not prevent marriage with all near kin, but only with those on one side. Biologists have now established, however, that inbreeding has no effect whatever on sterility.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Report of the Sydney Meeting of the Association for the Advancement of Science," op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> G. H. L.-F. Pitt-Rivers, *Clash of Culture and Contact of Races*, London, 1927, pp. 101–134.

<sup>3</sup> F. Speiser, "Decadence and Preservation in the New Hebrides," *Essays on the Depopulation of Melanesia* (ed. W. H. R. Rivers), Cambridge, 1922, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> J. R. Baker, *Man and Animals in the New Hebrides*, London, 1927, p. 60.

<sup>5</sup> The matter is fully discussed by Pitt-Rivers, op. cit., pp. 86–100.

Finally, statements have repeatedly been made that the natives are themselves restricting the number of births by the practices of contraception and abortion. Various explanations are given, such as that the women have grown lazy, that they fear the pangs of childbirth, and that they object to rearing children who will only die in epidemics.

My own inquiries regarding contraception were ridiculed. Had I not lived in Malaita long enough, the natives asked, to realize that everyone wanted children? Did I know any able-bodied adult of either sex who was unwed? What did I think they married for—only for help in garden work? That was certainly important, but people sought mates also in order to have children. Had they not taught me several spells the object of which was to overcome the curse of sterility? Would these be recited merely for amusement? Of course no one would take steps to avoid conception. The head teacher of one of the missions also told me that he was often approached by women and asked to pray to God that they might have families.

This keen desire for children is to be explained in part by genuine fondness, but, in addition, everyone likes to feel that his name will be carried on to future generations. Children also help to give their parents assured position in the social structure, and a couple with offspring can depend upon being well looked after in old age.

I think it may therefore be taken for granted that in Malaita contraceptives are not used. But even in places where contraception is attempted most of the methods can have no practical efficacy. I investigated the problem in Wogeo, one of the Schouten Islands off the north coast of New Guinea, and the following summary of my conclusions may be of interest.

According to Wogeo theory conception can only take place when the menstrual blood is dammed back by a considerable quantity of semen, and to prevent the formation of the foetus this blood must be endowed with sufficient potency to break through the blocked passage. A woman who has this object in view chews the leaves either of the bamboo—because in olden days knives were made from bamboo stalks—or else of a creeper with sharp thorns. Clearly this is a magical rite comparable to the drinking of water in which red leaven have been steeped as a cure for dysentery. To me it is in

fact unthinkable that the natives should have a greater knowledge of birth control than the average European, when they so grossly misunderstand conception.<sup>1</sup>

Abortion is almost as rare in Malaita as contraception, and for exactly the same reasons. I was informed that single girls who have become pregnant sometimes try to avoid the shame of childbirth by violent exercise or kneading the abdomen, but as such methods are usually ineffective for European women they are probably not of much use, except in a minority of cases, amongst Melanesians. In some tribes herbs are chewed, but such abortifacients are no doubt just as unavailing as native contraceptives. In Wogeo a very oily, and hence slippery, bark is eaten "to make the foetus slide away easily". The natives are convinced that this remedy is infallible; yet I found several single women with children. If the herbs are effective in individual cases the reason may be that they act as a violent purge.

If native contraceptives and abortifacients are proved to have any virtue it will still have to be established that they are now used with greater frequency than in the past. I have never heard of a woman myself who refused to bear children, nor of one who described them as a burden. Informants admitted that possibly if there were already half a dozen in the family the wife might not want to be further encumbered, "but if there are less than six every woman wants still more."

#### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR

I have reserved for separate treatment the widely accepted, but in my opinion erroneous, theory that interference with native custom is in itself an important cause of depopulation. This was first put forward by Litton Forbes, government medical officer in Fiji, in 1874, but his suggestion received

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* H. I. Hogbin, "Adoption in Wogeo," *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, vol. xliv, pp. 208-215; vol. xlv, pp. 17-38. A biological investigation of primitive methods of contraception is given in N. E. Himes, *Medical History of Contraception*, Baltimore, 1936, pp. 3-56. In some parts of the world *cotus interruptus* is practised (though on this point *vide* L. Schapera, "Premarital Pregnancy and Native Opinion," *Africa*, vol. vi, pp. 59-89), but so far as I know this has been reported only from Samoa and Tikopia in the Pacific.

little notice until it was taken up by the late W. H. R. Rivers.<sup>1</sup> He explained that when the aboriginal culture is, through European contact, destroyed, the natives lose their sense of values, and dullness and monotony replace the old colourful life. The incentive to rear large families is in consequence lost, and the practice of abortion extended. The resistance to disease, at all times small owing to the high suggestibility of the natives, is also still further reduced.

The argument that natives are especially suggestible is based on the belief that they are apt to die through fear alone when they know sorcery has been carried out against them. In Malaita, however, this is not so, and the people are no more susceptible than we are ourselves. If some Europeans did literally frighten themselves to death during the influenza epidemic of 1918-19, then probably some natives have also died through terror; but my feeling is that the proportions are about the same. I have also given my reasons for supposing not only that abortifacients are very rarely employed but that they are practically useless.

Other writers assert that the lowering in the tone of native life may have some effect on fertility. It would be necessary to specify more clearly what is meant by this vague concept before any physiological consequences could be considered.

Roberts goes even farther than Rivers; he believes not only that interference with old customs and the consequent despair are the chief causes of depopulation, but that this despair alone may make people die.<sup>2</sup> "That curious disease of the mind which finds expression by the wasting of the body sets in—a stuporose condition which has defied analysis by Western doctors but which is a kind of delusional melancholia. The native, making up his mind to die, forces his body to keep pace with his mental pessimism and dies." Medical remedies, which merely skim the surface, are ultimately useless.

Pitt-Rivers, in maintaining a similar argument, lays great stress on what he believes to be the harmful effect of missions.<sup>3</sup> Introduced diseases by themselves, he says, can do little harm, but missions, by destroying everything that makes life worth

<sup>1</sup> W. H. R. Rivers, "The Psychological Factor," *Essays on the Depopulation of Melanesia*, op. cit., pp. 84-113.

<sup>2</sup> S. H. Roberts, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> G. H. L.-F. Pitt-Rivers, op. cit., p. 192, etc.

living for the natives and giving in its place only what is new and beyond their understanding, little by little exterminate the race. In support he quotes the recovery of the population of Europe from various epidemics of bubonic plague. The analogy, nevertheless, between the population of a continent taken as a whole and that of a number of isolated islands can hardly be very close ; and in point of fact smaller units are known to have been wiped out by plague in the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps relevant also to remember that the islanders have received not one, but a host of new diseases.

The same writer, by quotations from Robert Louis Stevenson, gives a picture of Polynesia after the condition of despair has been established. The absence of a will to live, he points out, had afflicted the natives like a chronic disease from which they never recovered. In Aua, New Guinea, where he himself spent some time, the people had a word for it, *tatareri*. "It was heard most often after the brief visits of the Europeans' copra schooner, or after the epidemics of sickness with which these visits so often coincided. They would utter the word as answer when asked why they sat on such occasions in glum silence without inclination to do anything."

To-day around the mission stations in Malaita much of the old culture has vanished, but in the interior the heathens still carry on their old customs. Fighting has been stopped, but feasts are held and ceremonies performed in the traditional manner of centuries ago. If the theory of Roberts and Pitt-Rivers were correct one would expect to find that, although the heathens might be joyful, the Christians would no longer have any desire to live, and in consequence that their numbers would be declining much more rapidly.

In fact the situation is entirely different. Both Christians and heathens derive intense enjoyment from their various activities, and though they do become depressed during an epidemic, no one, I think, ever contemplates a time when the island may be uninhabited. Heathens are apt perhaps to be gayer and more hilarious, but by no possible stretch of imagination could one say that the Christians are permanently glum and mournful. I well remember how happy they were when one day they had to repair the Government road.

<sup>1</sup> F. A. Gasquet, *The Black Death*, London, 1908, pp. 77-8, 190.

They were quarrying stone and carrying it about 100 yards on hand-barrows elaborately decorated, for fun, with flowers and Croton leaves. Different groups held competitions to see which could do the work most quickly, and the whole morning was spent with jokes, laughter, and high-spirited horseplay. Such an outburst was not in the least unusual.

Figures are not available, but the natives themselves assured me that depopulation has been no more serious amongst the Christians than amongst the heathens. "People have died everywhere," I was told. "Christians and heathens, it is the same." This was confirmed by the fact that during my stay on the island the birth rates and death rates in the two sections of the community were approximately equal.<sup>1</sup>

Since *joie de vivre* is so conspicuously present in Malaita it might also be thought that depopulation would be less serious than in Polynesia. Roberts has, indeed, stated that this is so, not specifically with reference to Malaita, but with regard to those islands in Melanesia generally which have had little to do with Europeans. If this is true—and in the absence of reliable statistics I am by no means convinced that it is—the reason is in my opinion to be sought not in any apathy of the Polynesians but in the fact that for about a century they were allowed to possess guns and ammunition. Europeans began to make regular visits to the eastern and central Pacific more than a century and a half ago, and for part of that time many of them, missionaries included, did their best to encourage the natives to kill one another. In Hawai'i, Tahiti, Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji wars, some of them religious in origin, were regularly carried on for many years, and the death roll was enormous.<sup>2</sup> The Solomon Islanders, on the other hand, had guns for only about forty years, and even in that period pitched battles were quite unknown.

I believe myself that loss of the will to live has been greatly exaggerated. Some years ago I carried out field work in Ontong Java, where depopulation has been far more serious than elsewhere in the Solomons. Yet, although in about thirty years the population has decreased by seventy-five per

<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. R. Baker, op. cit., pp. 52–6, where it is stated that in the New Hebrides the situation is similar.

<sup>2</sup> Vide W. D. Alexander, *History of the Hawaiian People*, New York, 1891; Ari'i Tama'i (Mrs. Salmon), *Memoirs*, Paris, 1901; B. Thomson, *Diversions of a Prime Minister*, London, 1894; and G. C. Henderson, *Fiji and the Fijians*, Sydney, 1931.

cent, normally the people were cheerful and happy. Men of the older generation did tell me sometimes that they would probably not survive until they reached the age at which their grandparents had died, but I had no impression that the thought was a constant source of worry. The only time that they were seriously despondent was during a severe epidemic. When this was at its height the chief called the people together and proclaimed a day for dancing. Many persons were now ill, he said, and some had died ; soon many of those present might also be ill, and some perhaps would die. They must dance now therefore, while they were still alive and well, for who knows what fate may overtake him to-morrow ? But even in this crisis the folk on whom the future population was really dependent, namely the young, were not acutely depressed.

Another fact is in this connection suggestive. Ontong Javanese boys used in the past to be given their first clothing in about the twelfth year : nowadays elderly men, *though not young ones*, clothe their sons at a much earlier age, "in case we should die before they have grown."

I can only add that in all my field work, not only in Ontong Java and Malaita but in other parts of Melanesia and New Guinea, I have never seen a native die of despair ; apart from accidents, all who perished were organically diseased. Sexual intercourse is also, if anything, on the increase, and everywhere the people still want children. In some areas, as typified by Ontong Java, there is a general awareness of the chances of an early death from disease, but this can have small bearing on any decrease in numbers.

#### REMEDIES FOR DEPOPULATION

The only possible conclusion is that depopulation in Melanesia is caused principally by introduced diseases. This is confirmed by two facts. First, the decline has been most serious on outlying islands where medical services have been entirely lacking. Thus Ontong Java, though it is visited by traders three or four times every year, had only two medical inspections during the period 1900 to 1928. Then in the second place, increased attention to native health in the main islands of the Solomons during recent years has been correlated in some areas with a cessation of the decrease, and

in others, among which north Malaita is included, with a slight increase.

Other writers who have investigated depopulation from the anthropological point of view have all stressed "the psychological factor", and urged that if the tide is to be stemmed the only course is to stimulate native interest. Thus Rivers suggested a policy of constructive substitution, that is putting some new activity in the place of every old one which is suppressed. Where headhunting, for example, was forbidden he urged that the people be encouraged to pursue wild animals for sport. Roberts also has various plans for administrative reform and states that medical treatment will be useless unless they are put into operation.

Changes of policy along these lines are I believe vitally necessary to ensure better adjustment and future harmony, and in a later chapter I shall deal with some of them in detail. But I do not think that this is the way to solve the population problem, nor am I in agreement with Pitt-Rivers that the only way to preserve any Melanesian blood is to encourage miscegenation. In my own view the obvious course for reducing the death rate is to improve native diet and to continue the extension of medical services, especially to nursing mothers and infants. The birth rate, I believe, cannot be affected, and the remission of taxes for large families and payment of bonuses, both of which have been tried, are entirely useless.

Consideration of how new crops may best be introduced I shall postpone until I deal with schooling and education, but as an example of what is being done in Africa the following is instructive. "Whereas in 1930 the only crops grown and eaten by the Suk [in East Africa] were sorghum and eleusine grain, they are now using yellow maize, ground-nuts, sweet potatoes, European potatoes, several varieties of beans and pulses, cassava, sesame, yams, carrots, onions, tomatoes, bananas, and paw-paws."<sup>1</sup>

The rations for plantation labourers, however, are best discussed now. The following improved scale came into operation on 1st April, 1938.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. S. Scott, "Education and Nutrition in the Colonies," *Africa*, vol. x, pp. 458-471.

<sup>2</sup> Rules made under Section 86 of the Solomon Island Labour Regulation No. 15, of 1921, published in the *Western Pacific High Commission Gazette*, 24th November, 1937.

1. Rice (raw weight), 16 oz. daily.
2. Biscuits (Navy), or sharp, or bread, 8 oz. daily.
3. Dried peas or beans, or onions (raw weight), 4 oz four times weekly.
4. In place of item 3, yams, taro, sweet potatoes, or other vegetables approved by the Resident Commissioner, 2 lb.
5. Ripe coconut,  $\frac{1}{2}$  nut daily.
6. Tinned or preserved meat, 24 oz. weekly; or fresh meat (raw weight), 36 oz. weekly; or fresh fish (raw weight), 36 oz. weekly.
7. Sugar, 8 oz. weekly.
8. Tea, 4 oz. weekly.
9. Salt,  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. daily.

Dr. A. H. Baldwin of the School of Tropical Medicine in the University of Sydney tells me that these foods, while adequate in fuel value, are poor in fats, and that some of them, such as rice, biscuits, bread, and tinned meats, are notably lacking in vitamins. Very few, if any, plantations take advantage of item 4, although, again according to Dr. Baldwin, the coloured varieties of sweet potatoes, pineapples, bananas, and paw-paws, all of which can easily be cultivated in the Solomons, have a high vitamin content. Clearly there are facilities as well as scope for improvements.

The medical services available to the natives, although better than they were a few years ago, are also still far from adequate. At the present time (1934) there are only five fully qualified doctors in the Protectorate—that is one to every 20,000 inhabitants, almost all of whom are diseased. Two of these doctors are engaged by commercial firms to look after their own employees, and two are permanently stationed at hospitals, one a mission establishment in Malaita and the other a Government institution at Tulagi, the capital of the Protectorate. Only one of the five travels around the islands visiting native villages, and his work is often seriously interrupted, since he may be called upon to act as a relieving district officer.

The Administration also employs two or three European medical assistants to treat yaws and hookworm, and four native medical practitioners. The latter have all been trained for four years at the excellent medical school in Fiji and have a sound practical knowledge of therapeutic medicine. Their number will probably be gradually increased.

So far nothing has been done towards training native nurses and midwives. Amongst the heathen population of Malaita they would not be allowed, for religious reasons, to assist at births, but amongst the Christians and in other

islands they would be more than welcome and could do a great deal towards reducing the enormous infant mortality.

Finally I would like to see more mission hospitals. Most missionaries do their best to improve native health by distributing medicines and caring for infants and the sick, but although six different organizations are at work in the Solomons there is only one properly equipped mission hospital with a qualified medical officer in charge. The Methodist Mission opened two others a few years ago but had to close them again soon afterwards for lack of funds.

The following is certainly by no means typical of the attitude of missionaries to-day, but the fact that it occurred is an indication that the lessons of the nineteenth century are still in some quarters ignored. In 1933 a new mission station was being opened on an outlying island which up till then had had practically no contact with the outside world. The natives had been proved unsuitable for plantation labour, and traders never visit the place since there is nothing for them to buy. Why, I asked the missionary concerned, did he wish to go there when, on his own admission, so much work was urgently needed in other islands where Europeans had already settled? If he persisted, I said, he would be instrumental in killing many of the natives by taking them all sorts of new diseases. "I have the Good News," he replied. "Better they should die and be saved than live and be damned."

## APPENDIX

I have given below, for purposes of comparison, two ration scales from Dunlop Rubber Plantations in the Malay States. The Tahil is a Malay measure of weight equivalent to  $1\frac{1}{8}$  oz.

### I. FULL MEAT DIET FOR CHINESE

- 14 tahils rice.
  - 1 tahil challs
  - 4 tahils fresh beef (free from bone) twice per week.
  - 4 tahils fresh pork (free from bone) twice per week.
  - 4 tahils fresh fish (free from head and tail) twice per week.
  - 4 tahils dried fish (free from head and tail) once per week.
  - 6 tahils fresh green vegetables.
  - 1 tahil salt.
  - 1 tahil coconut or kachang oil.
  - 1 tahil curry stuffs.
  - 1 tahil tea.
- Fruit : two bananas or  $\frac{1}{2}$  paw-paw.  
Three hen's eggs, three duck's eggs, 4 tahils of muttoh or goat free from bone, or 8 tahils of chicken may be substituted in the daily ration issued in places where fresh beef, pork, and fish cannot be obtained.

### II. FULL MEAT DIET FOR TAMILS AND MALAYS

- 14 tahils rice.
  - 3 eggs twice per week.
  - 4 tahils fresh beef or mutton or goat twice per week.
  - 4 tahils fresh fish twice per week.
  - 4 tahils dried fish once per week.
  - 6 tahils fresh green vegetables.
  - 1 tahil salt.
  - 1 tahil coconut oil.
  - 1 tahil challs.
  - 1 coconut for eight persons.
  - 1 tahil curry stuffs.
  - 1 tahil coffee.
- Fruit : two bananas or  $\frac{1}{2}$  paw-paw.  
Where fresh fish cannot be obtained, dried salt fish may be substituted ; also when and where fresh fish or goat cannot be obtained, three hen's eggs or three duck's eggs may be substituted in daily rations.

## CHAPTER VI

### ADMINISTRATION

Depopulation, in so far as it is caused by introduced diseases, probably follows inevitably on European contact even when no obvious attempt is made to influence native life. But at the present time three agencies are at work in the Solomons consciously making changes. The Administration, sure of the superior merits of British justice, is now forcing the natives to accept its benefits ; European commercial enterprises, desiring cheap labour, are employing the people on plantations ; and missionaries, positive that Christianity is the only valid religion, are actively engaged in eliminating heathen beliefs and ceremonies. I shall now deal with each of these three agencies in turn, the Administration, European commercial enterprises, and missions, and indicate the changes for which they are directly and indirectly responsible.

#### THE SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT

The principal officer of the European Administration is the Resident Commissioner of the Solomon Islands Protectorate, who is permanently stationed at Tulagi, the capital. The legal code he administers is in theory that of England, except in the case of certain matters specifically dealt with by Regulations issued under the authority of the Pacific Order in Council of 1893 by the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. The bulk of these relate to the prohibition of the supply of ammunition and intoxicating liquors to natives and the regulation of their engagement and employment by Europeans.

Capital offences are always tried either by the Resident Commissioner or a Judicial Commissioner, but other matters are left to the discretion of district officers, one of whom is stationed on every important island. The natives are in some instances, of course, ignorant of the penalties prescribed

## THE PRESENT

for particular misdemeanours and crimes, and a good deal of latitude has therefore to be allowed in the interpretation of the law. Thus although adulterers are supposed to be punished by imprisonment, one district officer of my acquaintance, not in Malaita but in one of the other islands, ordered the wrongdoer instead to pay the husband compensation. I have known several cases also where penalties were remitted. Again, district officers are allowed to exempt individuals and even whole districts from taxes, if, for example, there has been a severe epidemic or a disastrous storm, or if for some other reason they consider that payment would inflict undue hardship.

The district station in Malaita, which is situated at Rarasu on the shores of Auke harbour about two days' walk from Malu'u, was opened in 1909, but until ten or fifteen years ago the duties of the district officer consisted in interrupting fights and arresting murderers. He was assisted by armed native constables, brought at first from Fiji until sufficient local recruits were available, a fine body of men to whom considerable credit is due. When it is remembered that the island is over 1500 square miles in area and at that time had a population of 50,000 natives whose acquaintance with Europeans had been mainly confined to experiences with blackbirders, it will be realized that little time was left for explaining any principles of abstract justice ; practical demonstration had of necessity to suffice.

Malaita has been under complete control since the end of 1927, when the arrest took place of the leaders in an uprising which had resulted in the murder of the district officer, a European cadet, a native clerk, and over a dozen police. Since that date the natives have everywhere come to realize that the Administration will not tolerate fighting and expects all serious disputes to be referred to constituted authority. A small force of armed police is still retained and has the duty of arresting wrongdoers, though only when directed to do so by the district officer.

## NATIVE HEADMEN

In each territorial division the district officer has the right to appoint a native headman, who, however, must have had experience in the constabulary and be familiar with

judicial procedure. In return for their assistance in maintaining order these headmen are given a small salary—the average is £12 per annum—varying according to their ability and the number of people they control.

In Malu'u the Administration has been more than usually fortunate in its choice, and the headman, Maekali, is a person of exceptional ability and intelligence. For twelve years he led the Malaita constabulary under W. R. Bell, the district officer who was murdered, and thus played a prominent part in bringing the island under control. He was in charge of the station at the time when Bell was killed on the other side of the island, and subsequently took command of a section of the expedition sent out to apprehend the murderers.

Maekali was brought up as a heathen, and when in early manhood he joined the South Sea Evangelical Mission it was too late to master more than the rudiments of the art of writing. He can manage the vernacular with difficulty, nevertheless, and even simple pidgin English. Without his help and co-operation much of the material in this book could never have been collected.

It is often said, no doubt with a good deal of truth, that natives when given authority abuse it by accepting bribes or else by giving decisions in favour of their relatives. I have never known such accusations to be made against Maekali, even by an embittered spirit when an adverse judgment had been made, and I can myself vouch for his scrupulous honesty. His position has not made him proud, and he is respected by Christians and heathens alike throughout the whole Malu'u area. For this his directness—some would call it bluntness—is partly responsible, but, in addition, he has courage, sound common sense, a keen wit, and a strong sense of humour.

Powerful *ngwane-inoto* still continue to settle any minor disputes between their followers, but if a leader has insufficient authority, or if two districts are involved, nowadays the matter is referred forthwith to Maekali. This is simply the customary procedure ; force is no longer necessary, though people do realize that the headman has the whole machinery of government behind him and can be instrumental, if they are guilty of an offence, in bringing about their arrest and imprisonment.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In mission areas minor matters are sometimes taken to the native teacher (*vide Chapter X.*).

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Cases are heard as a rule on a cleared space in front of Mackali's house, and anyone interested may attend. Each side states its version of what has occurred and brings forward witnesses to be questioned on relevant points. Sometimes the bystanders make suggestions, and occasionally I have heard an old man appealed to for advice as to what would have been done in the past in a similar situation. In most cases the judgment pronounced is more or less in accordance with former tradition and involves the payment of one or more *tafuli'ae* by the guilty party as compensation to the person he has wronged.

The district officer makes a patrol at intervals of about six months, and a report is then made of all cases dealt with since his last visit. In Malu'u there has never been any need to question a judgment. No doubt the district officer's comments serve as a guide for dealing with future offences, while, at the same time, the cases themselves give him a useful insight into native custom. If Maekali is at all doubtful about the justice of a particular case he either delays the hearing until the district officer's next visit, or else, if the matter is urgent, takes the whole party, plaintiff, defendant and witnesses, across on foot to the Government station for immediate attention. Serious offences involving the possibility of imprisonment, of course, he never attempts to handle. A full report is made to the district officer, who then dispatches police to arrest the culprit and bring in the witnesses.

During my visit rather more than two cases per week, on an average, were investigated.

A typical dispute bearing on the native law of land tenure was that of Kete'au. After a quarrel he had decided to leave his mother's relatives, with whom he had for many years been living, and return once more to the district where his father had died. As this was too far away for the transport of much heavy luggage he had presented the taro in his gardens to a neighbour. A month later, however, this man died, and as Kete'au was unwilling to allow the crop to be used by anyone else he sent his wife and several other women to bring away as much as they could carry. The dead man's heirs brought a case against him on the grounds, first, that once the taro had been given away it could not be taken back, and, second, that interference with the gardens so soon after the death showed disrespect. Maekali dismissed the first

claim, but awarded a *tafuli'ae* as compensation for the infringement of mourning taboos.

Another case at which I was present arose out of a claim for damages on behalf of a woman who was beaten by her husband for whipping their small son. She had fled to the settlement of her brother, who made the appeal. Maekali in giving judgment delivered an address pointing out that both parents are entitled to whip naughty children and that wife beating is an offence for which the penalty is imprisonment. The wrongdoer, although he threatened at first to go to the district officer, handed over compensation after a few days, and the wife returned.

Cruel husbands, I should add, are officially reprimanded only when they have knocked their wives about severely. It is recognized that everyone has the right to beat his wife occasionally or box her ears, but in this particular case the woman had a black eye and one arm was beaten almost to pulp. Some time afterwards Maekali threatened to report a wife beater when the district officer made his next patrol, but in the interval the wife begged him not to do so because she knew the man would refuse to live with her afterwards.

A slander case also interested me particularly. A party of young people of both sexes, all Christians, had gone from Malu'u down the coast to attend a ceremony at another church. They were away all night and had slept together in one of the outbuildings. On the way back a rumour began to circulate that one girl named Estelle had allowed a man Abel to have sexual intercourse with her. The couple protested their innocence, but the tale spread, and soon the parents of Estelle's betrothed, who was away on a plantation, began to demand the return of the presents he had given her. She and her relatives then went to Maekali and begged him to establish her innocence. He sent out word that all who had taken part in the expedition were to meet outside his house early the following morning, and when they were all assembled he ordered them to sit in two rows and began to question them individually as to what had taken place. Within an hour the whole story was proved beyond doubt to be entirely without foundation. But as all had spread the gossip Maekali decided they would have to be punished. It was a hot steamy day, and he made them all sit in the sun where they were until six o'clock. He himself lay in the shade and at noon

somewhat ostentatiously invited Abel and Estelle to share his meal, at the same time taking good care to ensure that the culprits would see all that was eaten and drunk.

When at last these scoundrels were permitted to go home each vowed to abstain from spreading false reports in future; but doubtless this has been broken many times already. Certain missionaries considered that Maekali had been most high-handed, but he won the approval not only of the district officer but also of the older men in the community.

On two or three occasions I have also watched the disputes arising out of the distribution of bride-price. It sometimes happens that the girl's parents retain more than is considered their fair share, and the relatives then have to seek redress either from their *ngwane-inoto* or Maekali.

Anyone may appeal against the decision of a headman to the district officer, but very few ever trouble to do so. Persons who consider themselves to have been in any way wronged by their fellows may also if they choose take their troubles direct to the officer instead of to their headman, but this again is rare. As a rule the only persons who avail themselves of this right are important *ngwane-inoto* who consider it beneath their dignity to deal with anyone less important than the fountain-head of law himself.

District headmen, in addition to settling these minor disputes, have the duty also of organizing any labour required to maintain the Government "road" in good condition. This "road" is a well constructed footpath about two or three feet wide which runs right around the island close to the shore. Bridges have been thrown across small streams, but with rivers this has been impossible. The work of maintenance occupies at most fifteen hours per month. Persons who are lazy or refuse to co-operate are liable to a short term of imprisonment.

The headman also makes occasional visits of inspection to all settlements within his district to see that they are kept clean and free from pigs. A Regulation, which until a couple of years ago was rigidly enforced, provides penalties when pigs are not kept in enclosures, but the work of feeding them was so great, and the natives in consequence so resentful, that nowadays they are allowed to go free provided the settlement is adequately fenced to keep them away. This is

no hardship, as the men's houses were always fenced in any case.

#### CASES SETTLED BY OUTSIDE AUTHORITY

The bulk of the cases dealt with by the district officer are concerned with matters in which the natives are involved with Europeans or Asiatics, for example, the leasing of land, treatment of labourers, and so forth. In Malaita, since the non-native population is only about twenty, most of whom are missionaries, these are reduced to the minimum, and in the whole period of my visit to Malu'u only two or three were heard.

The most important concerned a plot of land, really a coral waste hitherto considered by the natives to be of no importance since it was unfit for cultivation, which a Chinese firm in Tulagi wished to lease for the erection of a trade store. Land questions always present difficulties in Malaita since so many people are involved—all those whose ancestors are buried in the district concerned, as well as all those domiciled there. On this occasion the matter was further complicated by the rival claims of two different groups. The territory to the south was admitted by everybody to be part of Uala, and the members of this district claimed that their boundary lay along the northern edge of the plot. On the other hand, it was also generally admitted that the territory to the north was part of Alilo, and the members of this district asserted with equal vehemence that their boundary lay along the southern side.

The district officer sat on the veranda of my house with the people, including myself, assembled on the grass before him when the case was heard in Court. Proceedings were carried out in pidgin English, Maekali acting as interpreter. The Uala spokesman put forward his claim first in the native language, Maekali translating it sentence by sentence. Several questions were asked, and finally, as proof of his statements, the spokesman told how one of the Uala ancestors in the far distant past had hidden in a grove near by during an attack by saltwater natives from the other side of the island. "Our forefather took refuge there," he concluded. "Would he go to the land of others for shelter, do you think? No! He hid in his own grove. He was our ancestor; therefore the land is ours."

The Alilo spokesman then mounted the veranda and told his story, Mackali still acting as interpreter. He also quoted the deeds of an ancestor to establish ownership. Long ago, when everyone else had temporarily migrated to a small island off the coast, this person was supposed to have hidden in a small cave in the middle of the plot. "This man was my own ancestor," the spokesman stated. "His son was—[here a long table followed, ending with]—and that was my father."

The district officer then questioned various other members of the community, after which he adjourned the Court for half an hour to consider the matter. Knowing I had already made an investigation, he discussed it with me. As both sides had an equally good case the only solution seemed to be an arbitrary decision. The Court was reopened, and the plot declared to be part of Uala.

There is no fixed rental for native leases, and before an agreement could be signed the Chinese firm had to find out how much the owners would demand. This proved to be so excessive that the whole project was on the point of abandonment when the Alilo people offered for a lower price an equally convenient plot which was unquestionably their property. This the firm agreed to lease, but I left the island before any documents had been signed. I have since heard that as the depression became more acute it was decided that after all a store would not be a commercial success, and the whole matter was dropped.

In the event of a lease having been signed the rent would have had to have been paid annually in the first place to the Administration, which would then have been faced with the task of distributing it equally among all those with ancestors buried on Alilo territory. As there are between twenty and thirty of them, each would have received about a shilling.<sup>1</sup>

Of the purely native cases dealt with by the district officer in person, the commonest are those concerned with adultery. In olden days adulterers were killed, but to-day the penalty is imprisonment for six months, except in special circumstances, when it may be twelve months. As might have been expected, a number of Malaita husbands, on

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the unhappy results following attempts to pay all the "owners" in an American Indian tribe (M. Mead, *Changing Culture of an Indian Tribe*, New York, 1932, pp. 52-3).

discovering that their wives have been unfaithful, have preferred to settle the matter themselves in the old fashioned style.

A mission convert named Clement took the law into his own hands a month or two before my arrival at Malu'u. His suspicions were aroused by the fact that on returning home after paying visits to relatives he repeatedly found the young man Funiasi hanging about. I have mentioned already that married women are not supposed to hold any conversation with men unless other persons are present. Clement appealed first to Maekali and then to the district officer but was told that no action to punish Funiasi could be taken unless evidence was furnished of his guilt. Shortly afterwards, therefore, he told his wife that on a certain day he intended to undertake a journey. He left the settlement early in the morning but after walking along the path for a short distance went into the bush and returned, until, although well hidden himself, he had a good view of his wife's house. Sure enough, Funiasi appeared some time later and took the woman along the road leading inland to the garden. Clement stealthily followed and watched them embrace. Then, unable to contain his anger, he broke from his hiding place and ran at them, brandishing an axe. The women fled, leaving her lover to face the consequences alone, although he was quite naked and unarmed. Clement rushed forward and buried the axe in his skull. Realizing that he might be hanged for murder, he remained in hiding for a few days but eventually gave himself up. When the woman returned to find out what had happened Funiasi was still breathing, but he died before she could summon help.

Public sympathy was all on the side of Clement, and it was generally agreed that he had no alternative but to act as he did. He was tried in Tulagi and sentenced to imprisonment for two years, an example of unusual insight on the part of the judge. The mission to which he belonged suspended him for the same period. He stated that he had no intention of divorcing his wife, and she was attending to their property during his absence.

Another recent case of adultery is interesting for the light it throws on the European attitude to polygamy. Missionaries strongly disapprove of the custom, but the Administration has made no move to discourage it. Once a man has accepted

Christianity, however, district officers feel that if he tries to take a second wife they have no alternative but to treat him as an adulterer. I unfortunately neglected to inquire at the time why the charge is adultery and not bigamy.

The spouse of a Christian neighbour of mine developed some complaint not long after her marriage and became covered with sores. The illness was chronic, and she was soon not only loathsome to look at but, more important, unable to work. Her husband, wishing to marry again, sought the advice of a mission teacher, but was told that so long as his first wife lived this would be impossible. His next move was to carry on an open intrigue with the girl whose hand he sought. The first wife retaliated by appealing to the district officer, who sentenced him to imprisonment on two occasions. On the completion of the second term the girl's relatives accepted bride-price from him, and, according to native custom, he therefore became her legal husband. The district officer refused to interfere, but the mission issued a ban of suspension until the "concubine" shall have been dismissed.

After adultery, the next most common offence is failure to pay the head tax levelled on all able-bodied males between the approximate ages of sixteen and forty-five (Plate XVII). The amount varies in the different islands, but is assessed in Malaita at five shillings per annum. Those who live on the coast can readily come by this sum from sales of copra, ivory-nuts, or shell, but those of the interior are less fortunate.<sup>1</sup> Coco- and ivory-nut palms will not grow satisfactorily far above sea level, and the mountain people are without access to reefs where they could collect shell. Apart from their labour, they thus have nothing for Europeans to buy, and it follows that the tax is a means of compelling them to work either as plantation labourers or else as gaolbirds.

The central gaol in Tulagi, where long term prisoners are sent, consists of a series of whitewashed huts surrounded by a double palisade reinforced with netting and barbed wire (Plate XVIII). The prisoners, under the supervision of native warders, act as labourers for the Works Department and

<sup>1</sup> In other Pacific territories, such as New Guinea, the plantations buy native foodstuffs for their labourers, but in the Solomons this is not so. During the financial year 1931-2 the Solomon Islanders as a whole paid in head tax a sum amounting almost to £10,000. Figures for individual islands are not available.

carry out such tasks as maintaining the roads and public gardens, attending to the disposal of sewage, and transporting cargo when a steamer is in port. On the district stations the gaols are less elaborate, the sleeping huts being more like native houses. Here the prisoners have to keep the station grounds in good condition and carry out any other work the district officer may find necessary.

Prisoners have their hair cropped—mainly as a measure of hygiene—and wear as “uniform” a white cotton loin cloth and cap. At night they are locked in, and never at any time is contact with the opposite sex permitted. At the same time, they work no harder than ordinary labourers and are given practically the same rations.

### SORCERY

In almost all the dependencies of the Western Pacific the Administration has taken upon itself the duty of punishing sorcerers. The various rites, it may be admitted, have no direct effect, but the natives are supposed to be so suggestible that they die as soon as they believe themselves to have been bewitched. “Sorcery is deceit,” declares the Native Ordinance of the Territory of Papua, “but the lies of the sorcerer frighten many people; therefore the sorcerer must be punished.”

The Government of the Solomon Island Protectorate is an exception, and charges of sorcery are officially ignored. A Regulation on the subject was contemplated a few years ago, but when the district officers furnished reports so many practical difficulties were raised that the matter was dropped.

The problem is a difficult one, and, as we shall see in the next section, many natives accuse the Administration of lack of sympathy, and even of abetting the powers of evil, when they allow suspected persons to go unpunished. But in my own opinion the Protectorate has followed the wiser course.

We know already that the native belief is the result of ignorance, and that in Malaita sorcery, if carried out at all—and I am myself doubtful whether it is—can have no effect on the intended victim. The people themselves rely on a magical “inquest” to establish guilt, but as evidence of this kind is inadmissible in a Court of Law conviction would

be impossible. From personal experience in other parts of the Pacific, however, I can hazard a guess at what would happen. The natives are so convinced of the reality of sorcery that if they knew that a person suspected could be legally imprisoned they would perjure themselves to find acceptable evidence. In a gaol in New Guinea I once saw seven convicted sorcerers who had all come from an area where I knew that the black art, as in Malaita, if practised, was done in the utmost secrecy ! If the people found that perjury achieved ends held to be legitimate they would probably begin to satisfy all their grudges by accusations of sorcery. Indeed, we have evidence that in one community, Dobu in Papua, this has already occurred.<sup>1</sup>

Several Europeans, unaware of the true facts, have in my hearing condemned the Protectorate Administration, nevertheless, for its attitude. Some of them have also argued that those who carry out other rites to injure their fellows should be punished, on the grounds that all evil magic is morally reprehensible. But as these rites are performed by everyone, attempts at punishment would lead logically to the imprisonment of the whole community, obviously a ridiculous situation. If, on the other hand, only those *proved* guilty were imprisoned—though I have not the slightest idea how proofs could be supplied—the natives would be intensely irritated by so haphazard a system of justice. The rites also play an important part in the maintenance of order : as has been mentioned, they permit a person to secure redress for his wrongs, at least to his own satisfaction, without disturbing the life of his fellows.

Again, it is said that although black magic may have been useful in primitive conditions this is no longer the case when the district officer, police force, and headman are available to enforce the law. I would answer that there are not enough of these officials. How can a district officer and twenty policemen at Rarasu, and a headman on the beach at Malu'u, prevent theft from a banana plantation two miles inland ? Of course they cannot. We shall see presently that in the Christian community, which has given up magical rites, theft is becoming increasingly common, though amongst the heathens it is as rare as in former times. These heathens, in fact, have the advantages of black magic without its

<sup>1</sup> R. F. Fortune, *Sorcerers of Dobu*, London, 1932, appendix iii.

PLATE XVII



THE DISTRICT OFFICER COLLECTING HEAD TAX AT MALU'U THE NATIVES ADVANCE WITH THEIR MONEY ONE BY ONE BETWEEN A DOUBLE ROW OF ARMED POLICEMEN.

*Utag p 1,2*



drawbacks ; it helps to secure respect for the law but nowadays does not cause murders.

Finally, if the belief in black magic is to be eliminated, would not the Administration be defeating its own ends by punishing a man when others say he is a sorcerer ? The natives would not realize that he was paying the price of his deceit—from their point of view there would be no deception—but would imagine rather that Europeans must also believe in rites and spells. Their fears, in other words, would be confirmed and their beliefs strengthened. By ignoring sorcery, on the other hand, the Administration shows that the matter is considered to be of no account.

The best way to fight sorcery is to leave it alone. Legislation will not make the natives any less “superstitious” : we must educate them and teach them the real causes of disease. By that time the rites will no longer be carried out, for their efficacy is dependent upon the credulity of the victims.<sup>1</sup>

#### SOCIAL REACTION TO THE PRESENT SYSTEM

Despite the fact that personal vengeance and fighting alone have been actively suppressed, and that in the vast majority of disputes the verdict is in accord with ancient precedents, the people are fully conscious, nevertheless, that the law of the Administration is something imposed upon them from without. They feel that it is alien, that they have no real part in it, and that it does not grow out of their daily lives. “ You white men give us orders,” they have said to me, “ we no longer give orders to ourselves.” “ You are familiar with the Law,” remarked Aningali one day. “ It belongs to you : it comes from the place where you were born. For us the Law is different. In olden times we behaved as our fathers did before us. When you have asked me in our conversations together, why did I do that, have I not replied, ‘ It is the custom ; my fathers did it of old ? ’ To-day that is changed. The white man has come and tells us we must behave like *his* father. Our own fathers, we must forget them.” Another informant, again, spoke of the present situation in the following way. “ In olden days we did this thing, we did that thing. We did not stop and say to ourselves

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* also H. I. Hogbin, “ Sorcery and Administration,” *Oceania*, vol. vi, pp. 1-32.

first, 'This thing I want to do, is it right?' We always knew. Now we have to say, 'This thing I want to do, will the white man tell me it is wrong and punish me?'"

Other writers who have been interested in the native reaction to European administration have suggested that the personality of the district officer is of greater importance than the actual law itself.<sup>1</sup> In the early stages of contact this may well be true, but it is not the case in Malaita at present. The natives have no thought of the law as the whim of a single individual but regard it as a set of rules to be observed by the white man as well as themselves. Thus they know that the Regulation about keeping pigs in sties is still in existence but not enforced. Personality is naturally important, but so long as the district officer does his work conscientiously and is not subject to fits of bad temper the people do not complain about him.

Many attempts have been made to keep the white man out, but to-day his presence is accepted as inevitable, and everyone knows that revolt is impossible. The old men continually sigh for the vanished glories of the past, but I have never heard them express any wish to restore them by force. My own white skin, I may say, did not prevent my particular friends from giving their honest opinions. Further, no one has ever put forward a constructive scheme for general reform. The new regime is in fact rarely condemned as a whole, and one has to deduce the prevalent attitude from remarks about specific manifestations of white rule, such as the new penalty for adultery, head tax, and so forth.

The most general complaint is that adulterers ought to be punished far more severely. I have heard this over and over again from persons of all ages, even young men only just returned from plantation labour on islands with different marriage customs. This in itself is a striking indication of the extreme rigidity of the sexual code. Significant also is the continued rarity of the offence : adultery has certainly increased, but it is still most uncommon.

The natives lament that after imprisonment for only six months a man comes back to find his property just as he left it, and in 1931 when the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific visited the Solomons, Maekali led a deputation

<sup>1</sup> E.g. M. Fortes, "Culture Contact as a Dynamic Process," *Africa*, vol. ix, pp. 24-55.

requesting that the period be increased to five years. When the offender was released, they pointed out, his pigs would be wild, his gardens jungle, and his house ruins. That, they said, would be a punishment worthy of the crime. The Commissioner replied that he could make no special Regulation to apply only to Malaita. My own suggestion of the addition of a flogging to the short term of imprisonment was greeted with hearty approval, but I fully realize that the possibility of abuses would prevent the Administration from imposing such a penalty.

It is worth mentioning that in Guadalcanal the sentence of six months is equally disapproved, but for an entirely different reason. In former times adulterers, instead of being killed, were made to pay compensation. To-day, therefore, imprisonment is declared to be not only too severe, but definitely unjust: the wronged husband ought to receive something from the culprit.

Another source of general dissatisfaction is head tax. The natives have no understanding whatever of our own system of economy, and consider that we all have far more money than we know what to do with. They thus cannot see why the Administration should take away any of their earnings. Five shillings is to them a considerable sum, but to us they imagine it is not even worth a thought. The demand, indeed, both bewilders and irritates them. "Five shillings is a big thing to me," I overheard a man remark to his neighbour in the queue on tax day. "I have to work for one week to earn five shillings. To the white man it is nothing. He gives it away for a drink of beer."

Their annoyance is all the more understandable when one realizes that no European ever takes the trouble to point out the possible advantages of payment, and that not even the most sophisticated has any idea how the money is spent. "In a store I may have something in exchange for my money," a man once said to me. "But when I pay tax I throw the money away." Some of the mission converts I found were under the impression that the shillings were all put into a big box which was sent to a place called England and there for some reason given to a man called the King.

A sentence of imprisonment for failure to pay tax causes resentment, but people are not as bitter as might have been expected. Gaol is colloquially referred to as "the place

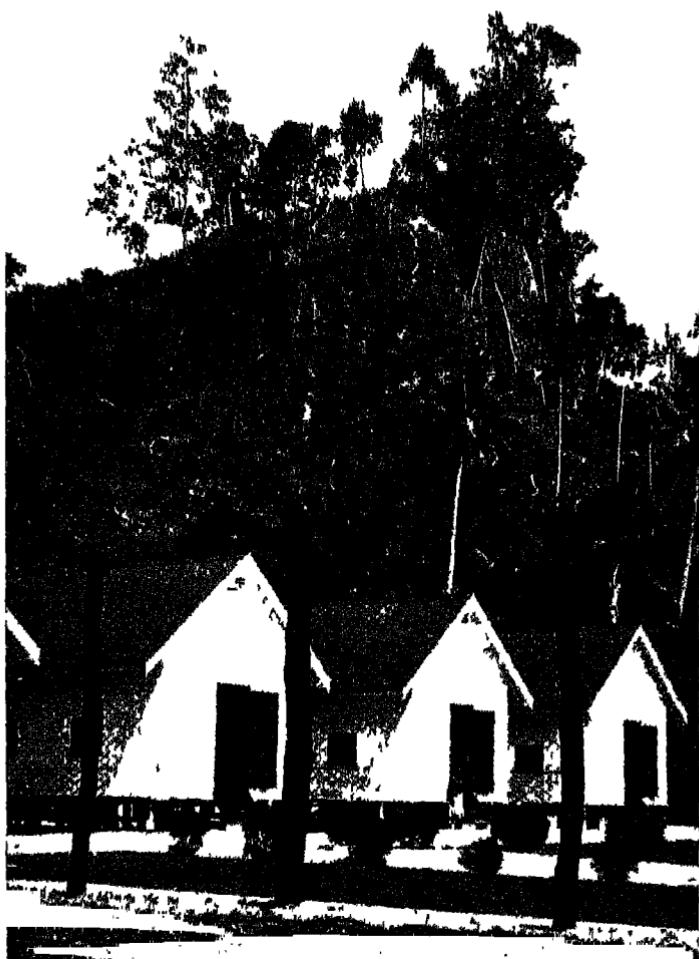
where one eats Government rice " or, in pidgin, as " kitchen belong me fellas ". The main objection is not so much to the confinement but to being forced to work without pay. A person who has served a term is also not necessarily despised, as is the case to some extent amongst ourselves. Thus adulterers are looked down upon irrespective of whether they have been imprisoned or not, but persons who have merely failed to pay their tax never are. The chief reason why gaol carries no stigma is in all probability that imprisonment is the penalty for so many acts to which the natives are morally indifferent, such as failure to pay tax and assaulting an unjust employer. In some cases the act is even held to be praiseworthy : Clement won the applause of the whole community for killing his wife's lover but was still put in gaol.

The Administration's attitude to sorcery also calls forth criticism, though not everyone complains. Many of the old men, however, as well as some of the more conservative of the younger generation, are of the opinion that depopulation is to be attributed to this cause. " Of old our custom was to kill sorcerers ; then they could do no further harm," it was explained. " When our fathers killed sorcerers there were many people here in Malaita. Now the government says we must not kill, and every sorcerer works without fear. They bewitch people in this house, they bewitch people in that house there, and we can do nothing. To-day many people die." Remarks of this kind are made most frequently just after a death has occurred, when in former times the expedition of vengeance would have been planned.

The prohibition on vengeance by direct action has led to an interesting new development—people now retaliate by means of prayers when their relatives die. A pig is sacrificed after the funeral, and a priest prays that the ancestors will afflict the sorcerer with some fatal disease. His name is mentioned if there has been an " inquest ", but this is not considered to be necessary. In any case, even if it is uttered it is not broadcast, and only those present hear what is said. I have been assured by persons taking part that this ceremony is always effective, and that the sorcerer will die, as no doubt he does—eventually. Clearly this is only another form of sorcery to meet modern conditions.

Several of the young men, far from complaining, told me

PLATE XVIII



TULAGI GAOL.



they thought this type of vengeance in some ways an improvement on direct action. "A sorcerer is a bad man ; he should be killed," one of them stated. "But if our ancestors do the work that is enough. Arrows fly when there is a raid and people in both parties are killed. I am not yet old enough to die." Another explained that when the ancestors did the killing the relatives of the sorcerer could not carry out counter vengeance, and that in consequence innocent persons did not suffer for the actions of their relatives. A statement by a third showed a good deal of humour. "The old men sit at home and talk," he confided. "They are all famous warriors. This one says, 'If there were no white men I would kill all sorcerers !' Another shouts, 'If there were no white men sorcerers would be afraid of me !' Look you, my friend, we have told you of all the raids in the old time. A great man died, and we killed the sorcerer. For little men, no, we remained quiet. These old men are famous warriors now they may not fight. It is easy to fight thus in talk. To fight with spears, that is different."

The young men are always ready nowadays to belittle the elders, but there is probably a good deal of truth in this gibe. Together with the other statements quoted, it seems to indicate that those who have never taken part in raids are prepared to welcome their passing. Old Aningali, himself a murderer on many occasions, also agreed that the peace of to-day is preferable to the uncertainty of the past. "In former times we had to remember our enemies always," he said. "When we were in the garden we kept our weapons at our side and never moved without them. If someone had died and vengeance had not yet been taken we posted sentries at night. I tell you truly that we dared not sleep soundly, and after a death we feared to go on a journey because we trusted only our closest kinsmen. Now it is different : we can travel all the time and think about our affairs. We know that our lives are not in danger." This emphasis on the terror of the past is I suspect somewhat exaggerated—though, as a murderer, Aningali probably had to take more precautions than other people—but the knowledge that defensive weapons are no longer necessary was certainly a relief to him. The Administration is seldom given the credit for the change explicitly, but everyone realizes that the white man is directly responsible.

A number of the young people, and even a few of the elders with whom I discussed the matter, were also of the opinion that it is an advantage to have a headman to settle disputes. They were probably influenced by Maekali's personal popularity—for he is well known for the fairness of his judgments—but specific mention was made of the fact that he argued matters out along lines which everyone understood and then gave his decision "after the manner of the ancestors," that is in accordance with precedents.

A handful of my most intelligent informants, however, were able to realize the value of an external authority who, after a full investigation, can give due weight to both sides in every quarrel. I quote two of their statements below. I am doubtful, it is true, whether they would have reached such conclusions independently, but, although in each case we had a long talk on the subject, their remarks are not to be regarded as in any way paraphrases of my own suggestions: rather they express points of view reached after argument and deliberation.

The first is that of my friend Kwanggaina'o. "You mean that in the past an argument between two single persons became a quarrel between two groups of people?" he asked. "Yes, that is true, most true. Friend, you have listened well to all our talk here in Malaita: you know all about us, you know us well. [This was not flattery, but an expression of surprise that I, a foreigner, had summed up the situation before he had realized it himself.] Here amongst us honour is of great importance. The honour of Uala—you talk about that yourself—the honour of Ombo; honour, honour always. Now to-day we may not fight for honour. Two men disagree, and they ask Maekali to decide. He hears one, he hears the other, he asks their relatives. He hears all. Then he says, 'It is this way.' He speaks truly. The matter is settled. There was no fight."

The other statement was as follows: "In olden days each man helped his kinsmen and group quarrelled with group. They used insults first. Then they remembered honour and fought. Honour caused the fight. Now Maekali listens to the talk of the two men only. It is settled by Maekali, and there is no fight."

The majority of the older generation, wrapped up as they are in the past, would not agree with all this. Being bred in

the tradition that honour and the reputation of the group are more important than equity, they would still prefer to fight. One of their complaints, however, is deserving of serious attention. The present system of settling disputes, they maintain, is robbing the *ngwane-inoto* and other leading men of all power. In former times a young man was entirely dependent upon the leaders of his group for protection if he became involved in some trouble. As these men paid compensation for his misdemeanours and, in case of need, defended him from being killed, he naturally took care to be obedient and respectful. To-day the motive for this type of behaviour has been removed, and offenders have as a rule to pay their own penalties. The *ngwane-inoto* and other leaders are, therefore, no longer in a position of privilege.

Another grievance, for which the Administration is partly responsible, is that the young folk are nowadays not interested in the history and traditions of their district. Grandfathers still tell children tales about ancient battles and how their ancestors distinguished themselves, but the information is soon forgotten. I one day asked a young man of about thirty years of age something about a very famous ancestor. "Why do you ask me?" he replied. "No! No! I heard all that as a child, but now I do not think about such things. We young men cannot go to war, so the battles of our fathers are not important. Talk of battles we leave to old men and children. Can Uala fight with Ombo now? Fighting is finished. Now we are one big people." These stories served to emphasize the isolation and independence of each separate district, and their present neglect is an indication that the barriers between the different social groups are breaking down. The natives, in spite of the old men, really are beginning to be "one big people".

## CHAPTER VII COMMERCE

Unlike the Administration, commerce is not concerned, even ostensibly, with native well-being. Plantations and trading stores have been established only because money is to be made, and the Europeans involved are interested in the islanders solely in so far as they supply the demand for labour and the market for goods. A few plantation owners, no doubt, feel sympathetic towards native development, but this is merely in their capacity as private individuals, and has little to do with their daily activities—though I have often heard the argument seriously advanced that the one chance of native salvation lies in an insistence that they shall work for Europeans as labourers during a portion of their time. It will now be our task to investigate the effects of plantation work and the changes brought about by the introduction of money.

### LABOUR CONDITIONS<sup>1</sup>

Youths leave home to work when they are as a rule about seventeen or eighteen. At first they have to make a contract for two years, but afterwards, so long as they remain with the same employer, this may be extended for one year periods. Most youths are away for at least four years, but many stay longer, and a few do not come home permanently until ten years or more have elapsed. The majority postpone marriage till their final return, but valued employees well-known to their master over a long period of years are occasionally allowed to have their wives on the plantation. The employment of women as labourers, however, is forbidden.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Solomon Island Labour Regulations of 1921 amended by Regulations Nos. 7 of 1923, 1 of 1925, and 6 of 1934.

<sup>2</sup> An adult female may be employed in domestic service under contract to a female European. Moreover, subject to the consent of her husband in the case of a married woman, and to that of her guardian in the case of an unmarried woman, an adult female may be employed from day to day on any plantation within ten miles of her home.

PLATE VIII



(a) LABOURERS' QUARTERS ON A PLANTATION.



(b) IROMBULE CHURCH.



Young men go away in this manner for a number of reasons. In the first place, they regard it as the proper thing to do : a man who has not seen Tulagi and one or two other islands is looked upon almost as if he has not been correctly brought up, and his contemporaries refer to him contemptuously as "man belong bush". Then these natives like going about and seeing something of the world. I have often heard them expressing their regrets that they are no longer allowed to work in Queensland, and when a steamer registered in the islands made a few trips to Sydney the owners were besieged with application from boys who wished to sign on as members of the crew. But the chief reasons why the natives work for Europeans is to get money.

During my visits to the Solomons the minimum wage was £1 per month, but in 1934, when owing to the world depression the price of copra had dropped to such an extent that plantation owners were virtually bankrupt, this was reduced to 10s. The employer also pays the head tax and supplies food in accordance with the ration scale issued by the Government.<sup>1</sup> Quarters have to be provided in addition, as well as regular issues of loincloths, blankets, mosquito nets, tobacco, and soap. The normal working week is fifty hours, but Saturday afternoons and Sundays are free, and certain holidays, such as Christmas and Easter, are always observed.

The majority of the young men become plantation labourers, but a few are also absorbed as deckhands and engine boys on schooners, divers, house servants, and Government employees. These last include policemen, warders, and messengers.<sup>2</sup>

The main work on plantations consists in extracting the meat from coconuts to make copra. Each man is supposed to cut from 500 to 600 lb. per day, and a bonus of threepence is paid for every 28 lb. produced in excess of that amount. The green copra is dried either in the sun or in a hot air dryer, bagged and stored until the arrival of the overseas steamer, which visits most of the plantations

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* above, p 138.

<sup>2</sup> There are also about a dozen native clerks in the service. Most of these have been trained at the Methodist Mission school in Roviana, western Solomons. The education available at present to the people of north Malaita would never permit of their employment in such a position.

four times in the course of a year. Other work consists in weeding, tending cattle, and effecting necessary repairs.

The schooners employing natives are engaged in three kinds of work, recruiting labour, trading, and collecting trochus shell. A licence has to be taken out, however, and recruiting and trading at one and the same time are forbidden. In point of fact the recruiters are all Europeans and most of the traders Chinese. The work of the crew consists in the routine handling of a small vessel. The divers on shelling schooners have a more dangerous task, but as trochus shell is found only on reefs fatal accidents are rare.

Service as house-boys is not particularly popular, though the work is easier than cutting copra. The reason given is that European women "are fussy and talk too much"—that is they insist upon cleanliness and they nag. The natives also object to serving meals in the evening long after the work of ordinary labourers is completed, although house-boys always have their freedom during the afternoon. When they have been well trained, nevertheless, they make excellent servants.

The buildings where natives are housed have to conform with requirements laid down by Regulations. The minimum space which must be allowed for each person is prescribed, as well as the number of windows, flooring material, etc. The larger plantations usually have a dozen or fifteen huts, all built of corrugated iron with cement floors, in each of which eight or ten men sleep (Plate XIXa). The beds are flat pieces of board which can be readily removed and scrubbed.

The principal employer of labour is Lever's Pacific Plantations Limited, an organization with plantations on practically every large island in the group save Malaita. The largest estates are in the Cape Marsh or Russell Islands, a little to the west of Guadalcanal. Here the original inhabitants have almost died out, and a great deal of the land has in consequence been alienated. Labourers stationed on these plantations have no opportunity to join in any form of village life during their spare time, but in other places there is often a settlement not far away where Saturday afternoons and Sundays may be spent. When I was working in Guadalcanal before I went to Malaita we were always inundated with visitors from the plantation six miles away during the week-end, and two or three of the labourers had

even married local women and settled there permanently. Spare time is also spent in taking walks in the bush, in playing various games, especially football and cricket, in yarning, and occasionally, if opportunity offers, in gambling.

When a man joins a recruiting schooner he either takes one or two friends or relatives to work with him, or else stipulates that he must be sent to an establishment where he knows a kinsman is already employed, so that on every plantation it is usual to find groups of individuals from the same place. Such persons naturally speak the vernacular amongst themselves, but otherwise pidgin English is the regular medium, for there are so many different languages in the Solomons that this has become the *lingua franca*.<sup>1</sup>

The period of their lives during which these men are away from home is one when normally the sexual impulses are particularly strong. Yet it must be remembered that the marriageable age for men in Malaita was about twenty-five, and that until then most of them were chaste. The other islands, however, had different customs : in San Cristoval the young people were allowed great freedom before marriage, and in Guadalcanal prostitution, in the European sense, was a regular institution. To these men exile on plantations where they can have no contact with women is a real hardship, and homosexual practices, it is needless to add, are becoming increasingly common. These are strongly disapproved of by the Administration, and a few years ago a youth not yet eighteen years of age was sentenced to seven years' penal

<sup>1</sup> Europeans are mistaken when they imagine that by adding a few "fella" and "belongas" to their ordinary talk they are speaking pidgin. It is a real language with rules of its own, and although the vocabulary is very largely English the constructions are Melanesian, and the words have to be given a Melanesian pronunciation. Thus, to take the example of the pronouns only, pidgin, in common with Melanesian dialects, distinguishes between dual and plural and has separate forms for the inclusive and exclusive. "You me two fella" and "me two fella" are the inclusive and exclusive forms respectively of the dual, and "you me altogether" and "me fella altogether" the corresponding forms in the plural. I am convinced that more than half of the troubles between natives and their employers is caused by linguistic misunderstandings arising from faulty pidgin.

The verses at the beginning of the book give some idea of pidgin English in phonetic spelling. This example was taken from New Guinea, but the pidgin spoken in that area, despite many differences in vocabulary, is similar to that current in the Solomons. It is an interesting fact that German missionaries in New Guinea, who have to learn pidgin as an entirely foreign language, usually speak it far better than those whose mother tongue is English.

servitude for "unnatural behaviour". The imposition of the maximum sentence in such a case indicates a deplorable lack of comprehension of circumstances which have been imposed upon the natives for the benefit of a section of the European population. The situation in which they are placed makes inevitable the reaction for which this very severe penalty was meted out. Such punishment also has little or no influence on the practices it is intended to eliminate; they will never be eradicated so long as the present policy of segregation continues.

Up to the present homosexuality has not spread to the native settlements, at least so far as north Malaita is concerned. The old men express dissatisfaction, however, about the growing laxity between persons of opposite sex, for which they blame habits learnt from natives of San Cristoval and Guadalcanal. The lack of traditional restraints while the young men are living on plantations is probably an additional reason why some of them now try to seduce their own womenfolk.

Personal contact between native labourers and their employer is reduced to the minimum and confined almost invariably to matters of work, since there is a widespread feeling amongst Europeans that friendly association would be undignified and lead to a lowering of "white prestige". The position will be made clearer perhaps if I quote an incident in which a friend of mine—a European on this occasion—was recently involved. He was walking down the street in an island township with a native at his side when another white man came up and reproved him. Natives, the man said, must always be told to walk behind. "Let us go to the pub and get drunk together," replied my friend, "so that we can enhance white prestige all over again."

It follows that the European has for the most part only the slightest acquaintance with the culture and mentality of those he employs, and that they in turn acquire only the vaguest information, most of it incorrect, about Western culture.

Various Regulations are in force regarding the way labourers should be treated and also the way in which they themselves are to behave. Thus it is a criminal offence for a European to strike a native, but equally if the native assaults his employer—and this is not an altogether unusual occurrence—

he is liable to imprisonment. Penalties may also be imposed upon natives who refuse duty. Island residents are continually urging that the punishment for all types of insubordination should be more severe, and in particular that flogging be permitted, but so far the Administration has resisted their demands. I am far from advocating increased severity, and flogging should never be allowed, I maintain, for offences against Europeans; but it is to be admitted that officials, backed up as they are by the prestige of Government and an attendant police force, do not always realize the difficulties with which a plantation manager is faced when single handed he has to force a crowd of native toughs to carry out some task they dislike. The field worker notices an enormous difference when, after passively observing native life, he has to be a temporary employer of carriers, perhaps for the purpose of visiting the interior.

The bulk of what a labourer earns is retained by his employer until the full contract has been completed, when a lump sum is handed over in the presence of a Government official. Most of this is spent in a trade store before the native returns to his home. The goods purchased include tools (chiefly axes and knives), clothing (loincloths and perhaps a cotton vest or shirt, a skirt or two and a pair of short trousers), pipes and tobacco, a few tins of meat and such odds and ends as a cheap watch, a razor, mirrors, padlocks, belts and beads. These, together with the remainder of the money, if there is any left, are as a rule distributed amongst kinsmen.

The coastal natives, as has been mentioned, are in a much better position than those of the interior, since, in addition to procuring money as labourers, they can also sell goods to traders. The hill folk are in consequence more careful than their maritime neighbours to hoard a portion of their wages for head tax.

#### ECONOMIC CONTACT AND AUTHORITY

The amount of money a native can earn is strictly limited, and probably not even the most highly paid "boss boy" has ever received more than £25 in a year. The type and quantity of goods purchased is therefore very much restricted, and the furnishings of the houses, together with the various

cooking utensils and so forth, remain very much as they used to be in olden days. Even native architecture continues to be uninfluenced by European building, except that in a few cases the floor is now raised off the ground. The diet is also just the same as it was before the white man landed in the islands, for rice and meat are far too expensive for regular consumption at home.

The most obvious effects of economic contact have been that steel tools have replaced implements of stone, and that instead of going about naked the young men now wear cotton loincloths. Heathen women are still unclothed, but those who have become Christians wear skirts, or, occasionally, a full length dress (Plates IX and XVI).

The elders are always grumbling that they now have to do their work unaided by the youths. They point out that whereas in olden days the young people formed a sort of working gang during the years preceding marriage and helped all their relatives, now they go away instead to plantations. While the community is no doubt robbed of the services of these young men at just the time when they are most useful, one must bear in mind that the new tools are so much more efficient that only a fraction of the workers is now required to clear the same area of ground. It is to be noted, however, that European gardening implements have not been adopted ; the people have no use for either spades or hoes and still do their planting and digging with sticks.<sup>1</sup>

Far more serious than these superficialities is the fact that the new economic arrangements, like the present system for settling disputes, are undermining the old men's authority.

In primitive conditions the knowledge and experience of the elders entitled them to deference. They knew how every previous situation had been faced and were thus in a far better position than anyone else to solve any difficulty that might arise. But past experience and precedents provide no guide whatever to situations concerned with white men and money, and in the changing world of the present the young people are more at home than their seniors, most of whom have never been out of Malaita. Many of the young bloods

<sup>1</sup> I am informed that in parts of Rhodesia agriculture is declining because the young men refuse to learn from their elders how to cultivate the old crops. Up to the present this situation has not arisen in the Solomons. Gardening methods are, in any case, very simple, and everyone has to grow the old crops or else starve.

imagine they know far more of European civilization than is actually the case, and not only reject the old tradition of respect in consequence but display superiority on their own account. Returned plantation labourers in particular are often swollen-headed, loud-mouthed, and bumptious, and parade any information they may have in pidgin English, to the intense annoyance of those who have remained at home. After a time, certainly, when they have again taken up the round of daily life, their exuberance is gradually chastened, but, if they are not openly rude, they poke fun at the old men behind their backs for allegiance to an old and outmoded order.

It is only fair to say that I did meet a number of conservative—or should I say sentimental?—young men who were passionately devoted to the past. These were usually excellent informants, all eagerness to help me record what “the Malaita of old” was like. But to many what has gone before is of no interest. If I raised some point relating to former custom in a house full of people half a dozen of them would always be bored by the discussion and, after a few minutes, get up and go outside, making some such excuse as, “I know nothing of what you talk; that is for grey heads. I was born after the white man came.” They were not ashamed of their antecedents but regarded the past as a tedious subject.

An important factor in the new situation is the dependence of the elders on the earnings of the young people. In former times all the objects of value—*tafuli'ae*, pigs and garden produce—were concentrated in the hands of the old folk, and the young people did not engage in any economic or ceremonial transactions. To-day, however, the young people alone can acquire the new valuable, money, for elderly men are not in demand as labourers. This new valuable is just as essential as the more traditional objects; without it neither tools nor clothing can be secured nor tax paid.

Where the old custom of bride-price still persists, the young men must obtain the necessary *tafuli'ae* from their elders, since cash is not accepted as an alternative. But amongst the Christians bride-price until recently was abolished, with the result that the young men could—and did—snap their fingers at their seniors.

Money and *tafuli'ae*, it is as well to mention, are not regarded as interchangeable, and the Langalanga traders, for example, never pay cash for pigs. Labourers do occasionally

buy *tafuli'ae* direct, nevertheless, paying from £2 10s. to £3 for each one. Thus when Maekali was stationed as a policeman at Rarasu, which is close to the Langalanga lagoon, he not only bought all the *tafuli'ae* for his own bride-price but actually watched them being made.<sup>1</sup>

Some old men still try to exert their authority, and if they have sufficient strength of character—and many have—they may be obeyed. But the forces against them are so strong that the majority no longer attempt to do so. Instead, having grown bitter, they find fault all the time. It is significant that the word *ara'i*, which originally meant old man or person of importance, has been degraded from a term of respect to a mild form of abuse. I have many times heard young men when reproved by a companion retort, "Shut up, *ara'i*," which might be freely translated as, shut up you querulous old fossil. In former years, so I was told, *ara'i* could never have been used in this context.

### MONEY

The older people are obviously in no position nowadays to insist on the handing over of wages. What happens then when a labourer returns with bulging pockets? If he belongs to a mission he distributes a certain amount among his closer relatives, such as his father, brothers, and any other person to whom he is under a special obligation, but very little, if any, goes to the elders of the district. One youth when reproved for his greed replied: "I have taken the new fashion now; we young men have no masters. Old and young people are on an equal footing. If the old men want money they must go and work for it." Only a Christian, having no bride-price to consider, could afford to be so rude.

The suggestion is made by island residents that the present situation is the result of a transition from "primitive communism" to economic individualism inspired by European contact. But, as we have good reason to know,

<sup>1</sup> The policemen accompanying the district officer on patrols to collect head tax have also been known to offer cash for a *tafuli'ae* if a man has no ready money with which to pay. They have the reputation, however, for driving hard bargains, since they know that the only alternative to acceptance of their offer is gaol. Maekali has told me that he once saw 5s. given for a *tafull'ae* which ought to have been worth £3.

these natives have always been individualists. The rights to land, it has to be admitted, are to some extent restricted, but other types of property were individually owned. If this were not so how could a person acquire prestige by distributing goods he had himself accumulated? If a person helped his neighbour to-day it was only on the understanding that the neighbour would give him assistance to-morrow, and similarly if a man gave away a *tafuli'ae* on another's behalf he expected some return later either in kind or in the form of labour. Mission converts are at present unwilling to give money to their elders not because they are outgrowing communism but because they require little or nothing the old men can supply.

Heathen young men, on the other hand, since they are still partially dependant, distribute their earnings. A few examples will illustrate this point.

Irakwai came home with a quantity of trade goods and £10 in cash. He decided to keep £6 for his father, his brothers, and himself, and this sum, together with most of the goods, was handed over to the old man for safe keeping. His sister, however, who was living in another district, received 5s. and a few trade goods for her own personal use. Then he gave £1 10s. to his father's elder brother, who was head of the settlement, 10s. to his father's younger brother, 10s. to the *ngwane-inoto* of the district, and 10s. to another senior relative. He kept 5s. of what was left for himself and distributed the balance amongst younger relatives. The men of the settlement also received a loincloth each.

Ngwane-i'a had trade goods and £12 in cash. The family share of £8 he gave to his elder brother, since their father was dead. His two sisters each received 8s.; his mother's brother, who had looked after him since the death of his father, £1; the head of the settlement £1 and the *ngwane-inoto* 12s. The remainder, as in the case of Irakwai, was distributed amongst close relatives of the younger generation.

Irakwai explained his distribution as follows. "By and by I shall want to marry, and you know our custom of paying bride-price. I have shillings now but no *tafuli'ae*, and my older relatives have *tafuli'ae* but no shillings. I give them shillings to-day and they buy goods from the trader, but later on they will give my father *tafuli'ae* when he finds me a wife. You ask why then I also give away presents to my

young kinsmen who are, like me, without *tafuli'ae*? Don't you understand? Do you think they will help me to make gardens if I fail to sweeten their bellies first? Or when the Government comes for tax next year and my own money is gone, can I ask them for a shilling to save me from gaol if I have not been kind? I would be ashamed." He was still unwed when I left the island, but at Ngwane-i'a's marriage all the relatives who had received presents made suitable contributions towards the bride-price.

The connection between distribution of wages and bride-price is revealed even more clearly by the case of Ngwae-sulia. On returning from plantation labour as a young man he divided his wages amongst his relatives. Then some years later, after his marriage, he went away again for two years. This time, since he had a wife already, he kept most of his money for his brother and himself.

Most people are much more firmly attached to their money than to their other valuables. *Tafuli'ae*, food supplies, and labour they still give away with liberality, but a man who will cheerfully help a neighbour to cultivate a garden all through a hot muggy day will think twice before presenting him with even a shilling. As Kwanggaina'o pointed out, "A day's work is nothing; to-morrow we can work for ourselves. But if we wish to get money we must go away to a plantation for two years, and how can a married man leave his family?" Once a man has a wife there is also not much of practical use that he can acquire through exchanging *tafuli'ae*. He gives these away freely therefore without regret and in return, as in former years, secures prestige and social advancement. Money can be used, on the other hand, to buy a wide variety of desirable objects, and no one has ever had enough. Finally, even if a whole shipload of goods were bought there would still be taxes to pay.

Head tax presents a serious problem after the supply of money brought back from work has been exhausted. An attempt is first made to call in old debts, and only if this fails are relatives asked for assistance. At the tax collection at Malu'u in 1933 only eight out of a total of about 200 came without money, and of these four were given the necessary 5s. before the end of the day. One may thus presume that if a man has not succeeded in begging his tax before it is due some friend will probably save him from imprisonment at

the last moment. There is a saying that if you cannot pay your tax it is better to appeal to an old man rather than to a young one. The old men may have acquired the habit of generosity in their youth, but it has to be remembered that the young own most of the money.

Obligations incurred by accepting tax money from other people are normally discharged by giving assistance in every-day tasks. A statement by Kwanggaina'o is, nevertheless, of particular interest in this connection, especially when it is compared with his remarks just quoted. "In the old time a man helped his close relatives so that they would help him. But if he helped a distant relative it was to acquire reputation. He wanted people to say, 'Look, there is a good man ; he helps everybody, even those who give him no return.' Then his reputation was made greater. That is why people helped others in their expeditions to kill sorcerers. To-day sorcerers are not punished, and if a man wishes others to speak well of him he must give money to those who cannot pay their tax. Of old the man with a reputation worked for others : now he gives money, and we say he is a good man."

A few ambitious individuals who are aiming to become *ngwane-inoto* have, indeed, the reputation for being generous with money as well as food and *tafuli'ae*. I was present when one of them paid the tax of a very distant relative. He turned to me and with a wry face remarked, "He knew I had money, and I was ashamed to refuse when I saw him looking at me." A third party to whom I related the incident sniggered and then added, "If I had 5s. I would go to the trader and buy cloth and tobacco. The store has no shame."

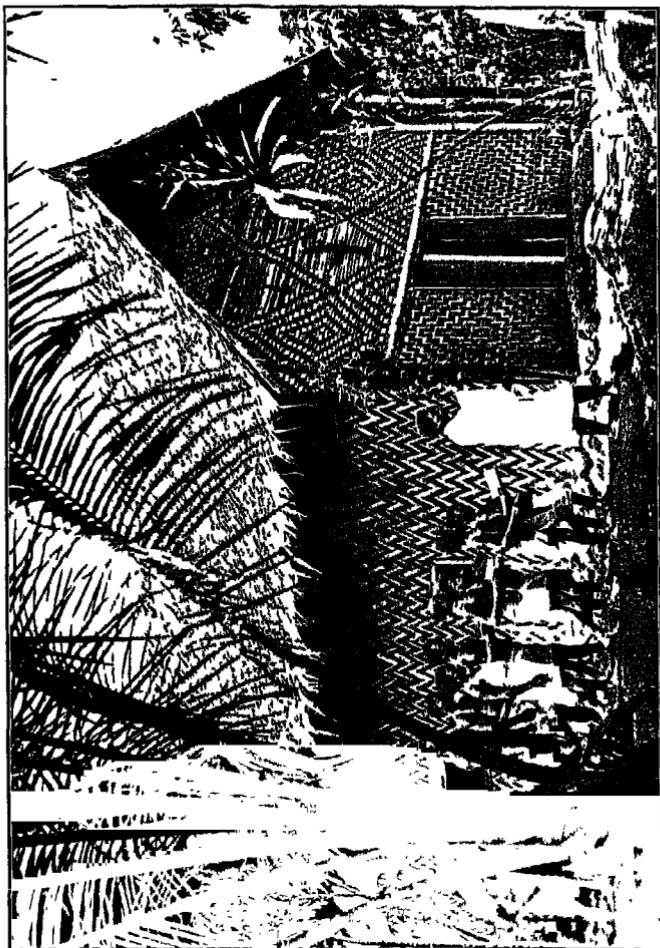
One or two unscrupulous persons have tried to beg from neighbours when all the time they had money safely put away. This was a grave risk to take, and once the facts were known their reputation was irreparably damaged. Maekali helped one man on tax day and then a week later saw him buying tobacco on a schooner which had anchored in the harbour. But although he was most vexed he said nothing to the culprit, "because he would have been shamed too much," and instead vented his feelings by spreading the story with obvious malice as quickly as possible.

Malaita is spared, nevertheless, another type of parasite—the leader who acquires wealth at the expense of his obligations—all too common in places where office is determined

by right of birth. Thus in many parts of Africa chiefs are using the tribute paid by their subjects for personal ends instead of, as formerly, for the tribe as a whole. The introduction of money has in fact strengthened rather than weakened their position. This sort of thing is not unknown in the Solomons, and in my book *Law and Order in Polynesia* I have quoted a case which came to my notice in Ontong Java.<sup>1</sup> In this community landed property is vested in certain hereditary headmen, who are supposed to use it, however, for the benefit of their subordinates. One of these men sold all the produce to a trader and kept the money for himself. A Malaita *ngwane-inoto* can never impose upon his followers in this fashion, since he holds his position only through their goodwill.

<sup>1</sup> H. J. Hogbin, *Law and Order in Polynesia*, London, 1934, pp. 136-7.

PLATE XX



A'AMA CHURCH—THE PROCESSION ON ALL SAINTS' DAY, 1933

*facing p. 172*



## CHAPTER VIII

### NATIVE CHRISTIANITY

The changes for which missions are responsible differ in one respect from those brought about by the Administration and by European commerce ; they do not directly affect the whole community, but only those who have accepted Christianity. This may be a temporary state of affairs, since the aim of the mission is the conversion of the entire population, but as we are discussing the present condition of Malaita it will be necessary to say a few words about the practices of those who so far have been deaf to the new teachings.

In the Solomon Islands as a whole 46,000 persons, or nearly fifty per cent of the population, were shown in the *Blue Book* for 1933 as heathens. In Malaita the proportion is much higher, and several thousand natives in the northern part of the island carry out the traditional religious rites exactly as they have been described. While indifference to both the new and the old religion characterizes many of the younger generation, there are still some who are devoted to the faith of their fathers and would probably resist every attempt at conversion. An obstacle to the due performance of the ceremonies may be created by the suppression of raiding, since only those who have shed blood can officiate as priests. Up to the present, however, a solution for this difficulty has not been required.

The native religion, in so far as it preserves the authority of the old men, tends to counteract the effects of the new legal and economic systems. Those who believe in the old rites are convinced that good health and success can only be secured by offering sacrifices and reciting magical spells, the knowledge of which is the prerogative of the older generation. The old men fully appreciate the position : one of them admitted that if his children became Christians he would be able to do nothing with them. I have also seen a father bring his unruly son to order by a threat to tell the priest to omit

the youth's name from prayers at the next sacrifice to the ancestors.

Spells for success in warfare are now unnecessary and certain others have been abandoned, since they are no longer of any value, but the same importance is still attached to those connected with health and disease, beauty and love, and general prosperity and misfortune. Many young men therefore deliberately take pains to please their elders with a view to acquiring magical formulae. A good deal of the traditional lore is, nevertheless, disappearing, since a considerable number of fathers die while their sons are still mere children. This difficulty is partially overcome by buying spells from outside, and labourers nowadays do a brisk trade amongst themselves in the few morsels of magic they have managed to pick up.

The old religion is thus a conservative force, and where it is actively accepted the young people, even though they take their disputes to a government headman and keep their elders short of money, have not yet grown completely out of hand.

#### HISTORY OF THE MISSIONS

Two organizations have been concerned with the conversion of the Malu'u natives, the South Sea Evangelical Mission and the Melanesian Mission. The former was originally established with the object of spreading Gospel teaching among Melanesian labourers in Queensland, and not until the labour traffic ceased was attention turned to the islands. In 1900 Miss Florence Young, its founder, made a visit to the Solomons, and in about 1905 missions with a European in charge were established at Irombule on the shores of Malu'u harbour, in the Uala district, and at other points on the Malaita coast. Malu'u was selected partly on account of its safe anchorage and partly because one of the Queensland converts, Peter Ambuofa by name, had settled there ten years before and begun the work. Two European missionaries, men unaffiliated, so far as I could discover, with any Society, had also settled there round about 1900, but both succumbed to malaria after only a few months.<sup>1</sup>

This mission was popular almost from the beginning, and

<sup>1</sup> F. S. H. Young, *Pearls from the Pacific*, London, 1925.

within a few years a large number of natives embraced Christianity. All converts who had any claims to land in the Uala district moved to the vicinity of Irombule. Peter Ambuofa was the right-hand man of the missionaries and in course of time came to be accepted as a sort of *ngwane-inoto* of the settlement : he directed communal enterprises, such as planting large areas of garden land in order to hold feasts on the occasion of church festivals, and, in the days before a resident Government official was appointed to the island, was largely responsible for the maintenance of order. Then he unfortunately became involved in a case of adultery and was suspended by the mission officials. He resented this so much that for a time he tried to wreck the whole organization and openly boasted that he would take it with him to hell. Later the church readmitted him as a member, but his old prestige was gone. To-day, a bent and forlorn old man, he lives alongside the mission buildings but takes no part in church administration.

Until 1932 one or two Europeans had always resided in Malu'u to conduct services and superintend classes in the school, but it was then decided that the natives were capable of carrying on alone, except for occasional visits by the mission schooner. When I was there in 1933 the station was in the care of Shem, a highly intelligent man who led the services and acted as senior schoolmaster.

The Melanesian Mission began its association with Malu'u during the same period as Miss Young. A couple of native teachers were put on shore on the other side of the harbour but a few years later were withdrawn. The whole area was then left to the other organization until a few years ago, when another native teacher was appointed. No European from the mission has ever lived in Malu'u, and at the present time the number of adherents, all of whom are closely related to one another, is negligible by comparison with those of the South Sea Evangelical group. They have come to live in the immediate vicinity of the church at a place called A'ama and thus form the only village in the whole Malu'u area. Their present teacher is Benjamin Akwa, who was educated in Norfolk island by the Melanesian Mission. At one period he joined the Evangelicals but some time afterwards was suspended for committing incest with his half-sister. The Melanesian Mission eventually readmitted him, and after a

course of instruction at the College in Siota, the Mission headquarters in Florida, he was appointed as teacher in his own district. I found him a most capable man and often used him as an informant.

#### MISSION SERVICES

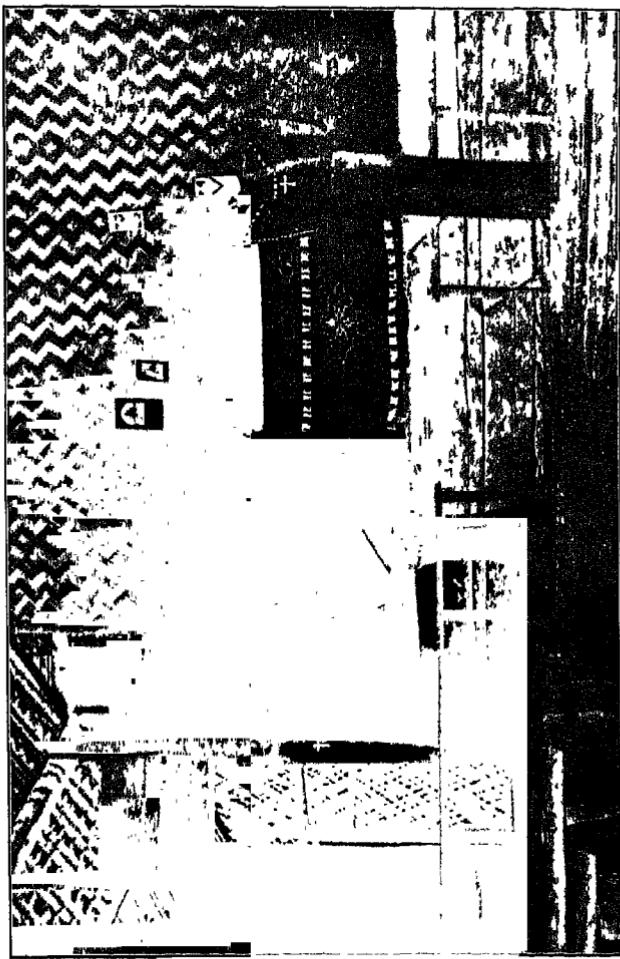
A superficial acquaintance with these natives would lead one to believe that their Christianity is practically identical with that of middle-class Europeans. Thus the Melanesian Mission church at A'ama, if one allows for the differences in the technique of the builders, and for the differences of the material available, is not at all unlike an English parish church (Plates XX and XXI). It is a comparatively lofty structure, roofed with palmleaf thatch and walled with woven canes of two colours. The body of the church contains benches for the congregation, and the sanctuary, which is raised a foot or two from the ground, has an altar on which stand a cross and, on Sundays, two broken beer bottles full of flowers. There is also a pulpit, a lectern in the shape of a sea-hawk, which is inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and a wooden font. These three show some attempt at following the old tradition of native carving but are of very shoddy workmanship.

Benjamin Akwa or an assistant conducts a brief service every morning and evening, and on Sundays the full services of Matins and Evensong are celebrated, partly in the local dialect and partly in the dialect of a neighbouring community into which the Book of Common Prayer has been translated. There is a choir formed by the boys and a few men, and on feast days a procession around the church precedes the service (Plate XX). Akwa, in a white surplice, goes first bearing aloft a large floral cross, and behind him follow the members of the choir wearing clean white loin cloths and coloured sashes. Indeed, everyone is careful to bathe and put on his best "clothes" before service (Plate XVI).

At intervals of every two or three months an ordained native priest visits A'ama, and Communion is celebrated. The Melanesian Mission is High Church, and on Saturday evening private confessions are heard. Baptisms and marriages are also carried out during these visits.

The church of the Evangelicals at Irombule is quite

PLATE XXI



A'AMA CHURCH—THE SANCTUARY.

[Facing p 170]



different from the one at A'ama and rather resembles a Wesleyan chapel in an English village (Plate XIX*b*). The walls are rough slabs of wood, the roof galvanized iron, and the interior entirely without ornament of any kind. I once asked a teacher why no attempt had been made to beautify the edifice, and he at once replied with the quotation, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal : but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

It would be impossible for all the Evangelical converts to live at Irombule to-day owing to their large numbers. The majority continue to dwell in their own districts, but each homestead has a little church of its own where the heads of households conduct prayers every evening. On Sundays, however, everyone makes a point of going to Irombule, where Shem, as principal teacher, superintends a combined service. There is nothing corresponding to the Book of Common Prayer, but the New Testament has been translated into the To'ambaita dialect.<sup>1</sup> Long passages of this are read, and different members of the congregation then pray aloud. Health, prosperity, and strength to carry on against the temptations of Satan are requested for all present, and I have even heard a man pray that every member of the mission might have sufficient money to pay his tax. Hymns are also sung, usually in simplified English, though a few have been translated.

Holy Communion, in which the mission has substituted taro and coconut fluid for bread and wine, is celebrated from time to time, and adult baptism by complete immersion is also carried out, though only after the candidates have passed an oral examination. Confession is also practised, but the penitent, instead of telling his sin in private to a teacher, has to humble himself before a full congregation. Public prayers are then offered for his forgiveness, though if the offence is a serious one he may be temporarily suspended from church membership.

The sentence of suspension is regarded as a severe hardship, and on another mission station in the Solomons several

<sup>1</sup> *Na Alaofua Falu*, British and Foreign Bible Society, London, 1923.

natives recently chose to be whipped for an offence (fornication)<sup>1</sup> rather than be suspended. The missionary concerned, I may mention, was subsequently fined by the Administration. My informants stated that they really enjoyed the church services and would in particular dislike being deprived of the pleasure of joining in the hymns. A person on whom the sentence is passed is also said to find the notoriety uncomfortable. "Everyone points at him, and he is ashamed. They say, 'There goes the man who did such and such.'" This is supposed to make him ill at ease when in company, and it is a fact that a person who has recently been suspended usually tries to avoid his fellows, even though explicit instructions are given by the teachers not to refer to his sin while he is present. Finally, a person who does not attend church is felt to be in danger of supernatural punishment.<sup>2</sup>

Church services are also popular on account of the opportunity they give to the old folk to gossip with relatives and friends, and to the young people to parade in their best clothes (Plate XVI). It is a well known fact that many courtships are begun in the church porch. People sometimes stay away when they have some special enterprise on hand, but even in bad weather the A'ama and Irombule churches are always full.

#### MISSION SCHOOLS

The children and young people attend school on three mornings of the week. In the case of the Melanesian Mission, since all live close at hand, this entails no hardship on anyone, but as the homes of the Evangelical converts are sometimes four or five miles from Irombule many children have a very long walk.

"School" may perhaps convey the wrong impression, for the instruction given is less than elementary. The teachers have all spent about two years at the central College of one or other of the Missions, but most of them seem to have learnt very little. In the Evangelical Mission they receive no pay, but the Melanesian Mission allows its instructors two or three pounds per annum. Teaching takes up only a

<sup>1</sup> This was in Ysabel. I have no information with regard to the native attitude on that island to sexual irregularities.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* below, p. 191.

portion of their time, and during the rest of the day they cultivate the soil like other people.

Slates are used at these "schools" instead of paper, and only the bare minimum of books is available—the Bible in English, the New Testament in the vernacular, and a couple of hymnals. Writing, reading, and singing are the only subjects, all three directed very definitely towards religious ends.

The Evangelical establishment teaches the vernacular first, and only if a boy or girl remains a pupil for five or six years, which on the whole is unusual, is English taught. The knowledge gained is poor, and I have never myself met a Malaita native who could either speak or write English—that is as distinct from pidgin.

The Melanesian Mission has only recently begun to train its teachers in English, and at A'ama instruction is still given in Mota, which was adopted many years ago as a *lingua franca* by the mission authorities.

Every morning before school twenty minutes are spent at military drill, for which every boy has a model rifle made of wood (Plate XXIIa). One might have thought that some of the old dances would have been more congenial, especially since they have no sexual content, but the Evangelical Mission views such activities with grave disapproval.

#### REASONS FOR CONVERSION

It is easy to understand why labourers in Queensland should have become Christians. They were cut off from all home influences, separated from their relatives, and in some cases entirely alone, and it was only natural that in such circumstances they listened to the urgings of the only Europeans who appeared to take an active interest in their welfare—perhaps even the only Europeans who went out of their way to be kind. Christianity, moreover, was the religion of the white men who in all material achievements were so superior to their own people.

On their return to the islands, nevertheless, home influences were too strong for the vast majority, who quickly slipped back at once into heathen ways. Peter Ambuofa, and a few like him who had spent many years in Queensland and absorbed the maximum amount of Christian teaching, were exceptional cases.

In Malu'u Peter at first had no success at all. He used to go along day after day to the market and point out to those who assembled there that although they worked hard to provide sacrifices the spirits by no means invariably made an adequate return with their *mamanaa*. If they became Christians, he told them, they would be relieved of the necessity of making further sacrifices and in addition be assured of life after death. To this they made but one reply, how did he know anything about this future life? Who from Malaita had died and returned? When he urged that surely the white men, who obviously knew so much, could not be wrong his audience merely laughed.

The first converts were young men, themselves eager to visit Queensland, and it is only reasonable to suppose that they were fired primarily with a desire to know something about the place to which they were going. Later a number of other young men joined, but the older people remained aloof, as they still do—though to-day many persons who became Christians in their youth are now of mature years. Peter told me that these early converts were attracted by the promise of eternal life and the knowledge that they would have to make no further sacrifices. This may have been so, but I believe that they also wished to be freed from the domination of their elders.

As soon as European missionaries arrived a further attractive inducement was offered: converts were taught to read and write. The natives are anxious to acquire the rudiments of education for several reasons. First they realize how very convenient it is to be able to write letters and keep a record of loans of *tafuli'ae* and money. A boy who can read and write is also eligible for employment as a storeman or supercargo on a trading schooner, and so can command higher wages.

But education for a Solomon Islander has a mystical as well as a practical value. He believes that if only he could read and write with the same facility as a European he too would possess unlimited wealth. My cook boy, a heathen from Guadalcanal, attended the mission at Malu'u in his spare time solely with the object of learning to read and write. "You white men are like us," he said to me. "You have only two eyes, two hands, two feet. How are you different? Because you can read books. That is why you

PLATE XXII



DRILL AT IROMBULI BEFORE SCHOOL



CHILDREN'S CRICKET MATCH.



can buy axes, knives, clothing, ships and motor-cars. You buy a passage in a steamer and visit places of which we have only heard, where people live in stone houses one on top of the other. You do not have to work hard ; you pay us a little money and we work for you, carrying heavy boxes on our backs. All this we know comes from books. If we understood books we could do this. If we could read your books we would have money and possessions." This was merely the most striking of a collection of similar remarks I recorded.

There is no Government school, and if a youth wishes to be educated he has to attend a mission. After a few years he begins to realize that what he is learning will not help him to secure the material wealth of the white man, and generally he gives up trying. But by that time he has lived in such close contact with Christians that he is as much a convert as they are. My cook boy, who at first protested that he would never join a mission but wished only for instruction, ended up by formally accepting Christianity.

Though each generation in turn becomes disillusioned with mission education they continue to believe that they could have what they want if only they were better trained. The youngsters, however, with pathetic optimism, eagerly take the places of those who leave school.

Apart from education, the promise of eternal life is probably the chief reason for joining missions. According to Shem, heathens who are thinking of becoming Christians always ask for information on this point. He quotes the appropriate passages from the Scriptures and gives his assurances that, as these are the words of God, they must be absolutely true. Such persons seem to be interested to find out not only whether they themselves will live on after death, but whether in due time they will also see their children.

The authenticity of the Bible is no longer questioned by anyone : the fact that a Christian can eat food cooked by a menstruating woman without coming to any harm is sufficient proof even for the heathens.

A few have also joined the mission after a run of extraordinarily bad luck. The *akalo*, they point out, did not live up to their part of the bargain, and they determined in consequence to make no more sacrifices. Christians always make a great parade of the fact that, while the heathens are

always making offerings, they themselves are not called upon to make God any gifts at all. They forget that the heathen worshippers actually eat the sacrifices and are unaware that the reason why the missions are able to exist without local support is the financial help they receive from overseas.<sup>1</sup>

The spectacular features of church ritual, sometimes given by Europeans as a cause of conversion, are in my own opinion of very little weight. The natives, as was mentioned, undoubtedly enjoy singing hymns and take part with enthusiasm in special services, but I feel sure that no heathen enters the church merely in order to do so. The Seventh Day Adventist Mission, although it has very little ritual, is popular elsewhere in the Solomons, and in Malu'u the Evangelical Mission also has far more converts than the Melanesian Mission, although by comparison its ritual is most unimpressive.

Some individuals have become Christians out of loyalty to their kinsmen, and one often finds that the decision of a leading man to join a mission is followed by the mass conversion of his dependants. On the other hand, some persons may well have been prevented from acting on their own inclination by the fact that their relatives were all unrelenting heathens. The result is that at the present time there is a tendency for the various districts to be either wholly Christian or wholly heathen. There are, of course, exceptions, and even to-day in Uala, where the mission was founded, practising heathens still occupy a few of the settlements. Their relations with their kinsmen are entirely amiable, and although each group abstains from attendance at the ceremonies of the other, the difference of religion presents no bar to ordinary social intercourse.

Until recently, nevertheless, the conversion of a group of kinsmen was apt to be made an excuse for satisfying old grudges. The Uala Christians, for instance, on one occasion attacked a rival heathen district while a dance was in progress, arguing as justification for their conduct that a festival in

<sup>1</sup> Both the South Sea Evangelical Mission and the Melanesian Mission are dependant upon private donations, though in addition the latter receives support from various church missionary societies. Neither organization is connected in any way with commercial undertakings in the islands. Many Roman Catholic Missions in the South Seas—and formerly also Methodist Missions—on the other hand, have become self-supporting through their own plantations and trading posts.

honour of Satan was an offence to God. Even to-day Christians sometimes interrupt heathen ceremonies by singing hymns and conducting a procession of mission posters and banners (Plate XXIII).

I wish to stress particularly, however, that in Malaita Christianity is in no sense an escape from an almost intolerable situation, as it used to be, and perhaps still is, amongst the American negroes. Thus they have no special liking for the Sermon on the Mount and are indifferent to the many promises it gives of compensation in heaven for earthly suffering. When interviewing informants I often used to quote verses from the Bible and then ask for comments. The discussion was generally most illuminating, but I never once had the slightest response from the Sermon on the Mount, which appeared to be regarded as a passage with no particular relation to native concerns. The people are never without the means of subsistence, and I gathered that they neither looked upon themselves as the victims of a harsh and cruel Administration nor felt themselves to be under any necessity for displaying humility.

Again, there is no feeling that in heaven all differences of colour will disappear, and I do not think anyone had given the matter a thought until I mentioned it. For the native there is as yet no colour problem, and he neither attaches importance to the matter himself nor realizes that anyone else may do so. He does not understand the implication of the derogatory remarks on the subject made in his hearing, and not infrequently I have overheard men imitating their employers and in mild annoyance calling one another black bastards. The difference between himself and Europeans, in the estimation of the native, is associated with economics and education, and to him skin colour is irrelevant. In a sense he is right : the question of colour comes to the surface only when white and black are rivals, which is at present impossible.

Thirty years ago, nevertheless, Christianity did owe some of its popularity to the fact that it came from the white man and had the authority of the conquering race. But now the natives know us better this is not so, and I had the impression that some of the younger men have a feeling of revulsion from it and are building up a more tenacious loyalty to their old faith. I base this opinion on the stout denials they make

of ever faltering in their allegiance to the *akalo*. Such declarations were also made no doubt in the past, before the missions were firmly established, but these men are now fully aware of both the advantages and disadvantages of Christianity. They decline to accept it, that is to say, with knowledge, not ignorance. I have also been informed that, despite the large number of heathens, the new converts are growing less each year. This requires confirmation, but, as usual, figures are not obtainable.

#### CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

Do the practices of these Malaita Christians and the beliefs on which they are based resemble so closely those of the conventional Christians of Western Europe? To speak of a "Malaita Christian" probably implies too great a uniformity, for individual beliefs differ somewhat according to such factors as the length of time which has elapsed since the person was converted, his contacts with his heathen relatives, his temperament, and so forth. These variations, nevertheless, are confined to matters of detail: the essential doctrines, except in the case of recent converts who do not profess as yet to have mastered the new teachings, are always fundamentally the same.

In the matter of belief there are a few differences, which I shall indicate, between the Anglicans and the Evangelicals. The question of whether it is advisable for two missions to be established in close proximity will be discussed later, but in Malu'u the different sets of converts, although they have little love for one another, do not quarrel expressly over matters of doctrine. The differences are regarded as of so little moment that when a person is suspended by one church, or has had a dispute with a teacher, he not infrequently after an interval joins the other.

To give the beliefs in detail I should have to incorporate a great deal of the Bible. The natives are familiar with both the Old and the New Testaments, and if they cannot themselves read will at least have heard passages proclaimed aloud by a teacher every Sunday. So intimate with the Scriptures have they become that long arguments are held about points of doubtful interpretation and other difficulties,

PLATE XXIII



MISSION POSTERS AT A HEATHEN FESTIVAL.

[Facing p. 154]



such as where Cain's wife came from, and chapter and verse are sometimes quoted as justification for a particular line of action. I was therefore forced to ask which beliefs were regarded as the most important. It was generally agreed that Christianity ultimately rests on the first revolt of Satan, the Creation, the fall, and the redemption.

The following is a compressed version of what Aningali told me. He gave up the heathen religion long ago, and during the early years of the Evangelical Mission was one of Peter Ambuofa's best friends.

In the beginning God lived in heaven with the angels, who did no work but were happy singing His praises all day long. But Satan, the chief of the angels, was envious of God. " You know how it is when a man is proud—he becomes jealous because he is inferior. Satan's reputation was not as great as God's, and he wished to raise himself up and have the praises. He was just like the brothers of a *ngwane-inoto*. You have seen yourself how often they envy his fame and wish to displace him so that they may become the leaders of their kinsmen. What did he do ? He whispered to the other angels, ' God is like us : let us displace Him and sit on the high seat ourselves.' They discussed everything, they plotted and made plans to cast God out. But God knew what they were doing. He hears everything we say to-day, and He heard their talk then. He prepared His warriors and sent them with the Angel Michael to surround the wicked angels. They attacked just as I have told you we used to do when I was a young man. No, they had no guns. They approached stealthily and softly, invisible to all, and cast Satan and the rest right out of heaven. God threw them into hell below, where they remain crying out in torment for ever."

It is interesting to observe how this dispute between God and Satan has been expressed in terms of the life with which the natives are familiar. The jealousy of the young and ambitious for the established *ngwane-inoto* is to be seen almost every day. Like the *ngwane-inoto*, too, God did not Himself engage in the raid but sent His warriors under the trained leader Michael, who was actually referred to by the native term *ngwane-ramo*.

Then God made the earth and afterwards fashioned man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils

the breath of life, so that man became alive. This was Adam. Then God created the birds and beasts for man's use and finally made the first woman, Eve, to be man's companion. These two, Adam and Eve, were placed in a beautiful garden where God came and walked with them in the cool of the evening. All manner of fruits grew, and they had plenty of food to eat without having to do any work. Two trees only were set apart, and the fruit from these they were forbidden to pluck.

Satan saw this as an opportunity for renewing his feud. "As such men do, he said 'I will spoil my enemy's work.' Then he changed himself into a snake, entered the garden and spoke to the woman. (You know how weak women are, how they listen to talk.) Yes, she heard and believed. He told her to eat the forbidden fruit, and she did so. Satan was cunning and would not go to Adam first. No, he went to the woman. Women may be tempted by a snake, but a man can be weakened only by a woman. Of course, when they remembered they were afraid and ran away to hide. In the cool of the evening God came to seek them, and when He saw the fruit had been eaten He was very angry. He cursed the snake so that it goes on its belly for ever ; He cursed the ground, and weeds grew ; He cursed those two and told them that now they must work for the food they ate. They laboured, and sweat ran from their bodies, but if they paused they were hungry. All peoples are sprung from those two : they are our ancestors as well as yours, and now we all have to work hard on account of their disobedience."

After a time God's anger cooled, and He told Adam and Eve that if they obeyed Him in future and offered sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sins He would at last forgive them and allow them after death to see His face again in heaven. If they did not heed His word then at last when all the dead were judged He would send them to burn in hell with Satan.

In the course of generations, despite the fact that various good men, known as Prophets, reminded people of God's promise of heaven, they forgot all about Him. Satan whispered in their hearts, and they obeyed him instead, until the world became a place of wickedness. Then God looked down once more from His seat in heaven and felt pity that all men must go to hell. He determined to have a Son and send

Him to teach them how to act in order that they might after death join the angels.

" This Son was our Lord Jesus Christ. He told people what to do if they wished to reach heaven. His words, written down by His companions, are in the Gospels. When He had told them everything He gave Himself up and was crucified as a last sacrifice. He made Himself a gift to God so that all men's sins in the past would be forgiven, and all those they might commit in the future. The last meal He ate with His companions before He died was the beginning of Holy Communion, which we celebrate now to remind ourselves that He was a man once and opened the door of heaven to us.

" To-day if we wish to see God when we die we must follow the teachings of the Gospels and the rest of the Bible. God does not want sacrifices any more. They became unnecessary after Jesus Christ gave Himself up to be the last sacrifice."

I went over this account with other informants and am satisfied that it contains the main essentials of Malaita Christian belief. It is believed implicitly by all converts, and although I have recorded several versions all emphasize the same points. In other words, it is a real religious myth.

According to the Evangelicals the immortal soul, that part of man which survives the grave, passes at death to heaven, where it remains till the last day, when all souls are to be judged, after which the good will stay with God and the evil be cast into the fires of hell. The Anglicans believe in an intervening region, paradise, where the souls live between death and the last day, and also say that before Christ ascended to heaven He freed the few good people of the Old Testament from hell.

Several details call for comment ; first what are heaven and hell like ? The natives are rather vague on the subject, excusing themselves by pointing out that the Bible itself is not very specific. Heaven is merely a good place somewhere in the sky where there is neither sickness nor pain, where no one has any work to do, and where there is only happiness. The location of hell is not known, but it is a place of sorrow and weeping, where all have to labour, and where the souls are continually tortured by fires which burn but do not consume.

It is implied that everyone is free to choose whether he shall go to heaven or hell. The right path, I was told, is indicated by the Bible, but Satan is continually suggesting that people should not follow its teachings. Eve knew that she ought not to have eaten the forbidden fruit and should have closed her ears when Satan came and whispered to her. God punished her for listening, as He will also punish us if we neglect His commands.

At the same time, I was also informed that God can intervene and help people from following evil ways. Thus temptation is translated by the word *ili-to'o-na*, trial—when a man attempts to overcome another in a fight he speaks of it as his *ili-to'o-na*, his trial—and the prayer, "Lead us not into temptation," when put into To'ambaita, asks God to spare us from Satan's attempts to be victorious over us. Worshippers also pray for *sukwa'ia*, supernatural strength, against Satan.

There appears to be a certain amount of confusion here, and the same informants who told me that man is free to choose whether he shall be good or bad also described how God's holy spirit stands on one side and urges him to go along the right path. I finally came to the conclusion that the normal attitude is to consider that responsibility lies with man alone, but that each individual likes to think that God will help him personally to make the correct choice.

The words used for holy spirit are *ano'endo ambu*. *Ambu* is simply sacred, but *ano'endo*, it will be remembered, corresponds roughly with what we call a ghost, the spiritual portion of a dead man which frightens people by playing pranks. I cannot help thinking that the translator of the Scriptures might have used a happier word. Satan has no spirit : he is omnipresent.

The word for soul is *mango-na*, which has been taken over directly from the heathen religion, where it is used for the immortal spirit which passes after death to Anonggwau island. The heathens also believe that a man has a third spirit, the *akalo*, to which they offer their sacrifices. I shall discuss the Christian view regarding the *akalo* later.

I asked my informants several times why, if God can do everything, He did not kill Satan. If he had only been

annihilated or rendered powerless, I reminded them, man would never have suffered temptation. This was a question they had not thought about before, and there was no answer ready. Most of them said frankly that they did not know, but one or two, after thinking for a few minutes, explained that Satan, being an angel, was of the same flesh as God, and therefore could not be destroyed. One man ventured the opinion that as Satan was a spirit he must go on living for ever: even human souls cannot be made to perish utterly.

I was pursuing these inquiries at a time when, owing to the breakdown of the schooner which usually brought my stores, I was running seriously short and had been compelled to get taro and other food from native friends. This suggested an analogy to Kwanggaina'o, who explained that it would have been a good idea, if I had been trying to find out who was fond of me, to have only pretended that my supplies were insufficient and then waited to see who would make me gifts. If God wished to do so, he said, He could banish Satan to hell, but He leaves him free in order to see who will be faithful. That He really does love mankind is proved by the fact that He sent His own Son to suffer a cruel death.

God is also said to be like a father who whips his children when they do wrong. This He has the right to do, for He put breath into Adam and so was the creator of us all. He can do everything, but having given men freedom to choose whether they shall be good or bad, it is proper that He should punish them if they fail to heed His warnings. "When a man has a tree from which he wishes to make a straight pole he cuts pieces out of it, and God in the same way cuts pieces out of men to make them straight—that is He punishes them."

It is clear that, considered from a disinterested standpoint, this Malaita God is an unlovely tyrant who has the power to keep men good but instead allows them to be tempted and then punished. Jesus Christ, however, is looked upon as a much more friendly being who gives protection from the anger of the father. According to Kwanggaina'o, again, God is like the Resident Commissioner in Tulagi who protects everyone but never listens to individual complaints, since that is the duty of the headman and district officer. The

analogy is not I think a good one, but it illustrates the native point of view.

A comparison with the Administration was also used to explain why, when faced with the prospect of hell, men still listen to Satan. People know that if they commit certain offences they will be imprisoned, but they still do them. The only difference is that the law of the Government may sometimes be evaded with impunity, but God knows everything and punishes all sinners.

The rules of right conduct which Christians are supposed to observe consist first of the Ten Commandments, which have a divine origin in that God gave them Himself to Moses. Then there are various other rules mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, as, for example, St. Paul's prohibition on the consumption of blood and food offered to idols. It is on account of this last that Christians never take part in heathen feasts, where pigs are offered to the ancestral spirits. Missionaries are also apt to add other rules, a fact which some of the younger folk strongly resent. They object to being told, for instance, that they must not pierce their ears and chew betel-nut, since they can find no mention of such matters in the Bible. One man was so angry when a missionary refused to allow him to marry his deceased wife's sister that he left the mission for good.

One further point in Aningali's account calls for comment, namely the attitude to sacrifice and Communion. I cannot say whether the Evangelical missionaries really do teach that the Crucifixion was a sacrifice of blood "for the sins of the whole world", rendering future offerings unnecessary, but the natives are unanimous in this opinion and also hold the view that Communion is in some ways a substitute. It is regarded as by far the most important church service, and attendance by everyone is held to be absolutely essential. I was informed that God is particularly gratified to see them all together, and in consequence the more ready to accede to their prayers and requests and to grant them good fortune. "Communion makes us think of God and Him think of us. It is like the dance and sacrifice," said Aningali. "After sacrifices the spirits feel kind and exert their *mamanaa*. We do not make sacrifices; God does not want them now. But after Communion He knows we belong to the mission and grants all our prayers."

## 'THE NATIVE SIDE OF CHRISTIANITY

These beliefs are obviously Christian in origin, and many fundamentalists in Europe would probably still be prepared to accept them. But Malaita Christianity has in addition an entirely native side based on the old heathen religion.

Heathens believe that one of the three spirits associated with every dead person, the *akalo*, is possessed of *mamanaa*, supernatural power, which it can use to reward mortals according to their deserts. They therefore offer sacrifices and pray that in return the *akalo* will exert this *mamanaa* to make the crops grow, to cover them up (*thufi*) so that disease and sorcery cannot reach them, and to give them strength (*sukwa'ia*) to overcome their enemies.

The Christians use the same word *mamanaa* to describe God's supernatural power, which they say is equivalent to the power of the *akalo*, and though they do not make sacrifices, they pray for essentially the same benefits in closely similar terms. The word for a prayer to God, *fo'a*, is the same as that for a prayer to the *akalo*, and Jesus Christ, in His rôle of Saviour, is known as *Thufia*, that is Coverer.

Certain actions are supposed to anger the *akalo*, who then withdraw their *mamanaa*, with the result that the health and other concerns of their descendants are gravely endangered. Failure to obey the rules God has given to man similarly involves the withdrawal of His *mamanaa*, and the affairs of the sinner begin to languish, and sooner or later he is taken ill.

Thus the Christian and the heathen view alike is that good men will be rewarded and bad men punished during their lifetime. But the Christians believe also that these rewards and punishments will be considerably augmented after death. Health and success, and the promise of heaven, in other words, are supposed to be the rewards of virtue, and disease and death, together with the assurance of hell, are punishments for vice.

Native ideas of virtue and vice are built up mainly around the Ten Commandments and a few extra rules from the Bible, but failure to carry out the orders of a teacher, unless they are obviously wrong, and neglect of church services are also serious offences. If any doubt exists in a person's mind as to whether any particular line of conduct is in

accordance with Christianity he appeals first to the native teacher, and if he cannot give an adequate answer the matter is referred to a missionary. It is always easy, therefore, to find out what is right and what is wrong.

There is also a close parallel between the Christian and heathen attitudes towards confession (*ihuma*). In the Evangelical Mission the sinner confesses in church, and the congregation prays for him: in the Melanesian Mission he confesses to the priest, who then beseeches God to continue to exercise *mamanaa* on his behalf. Persistence of good health is the only infallible sign of forgiveness.

A few cases will serve to illustrate this belief in the connection between disease and sin.

Benjamin Akwa's assistant in the church at A'ama, Fafanda, had a bad attack of gastric malaria. I administered quinine, but as he was continually vomiting it was quite useless. After about the fourth day Akwa came to see him, and as he sat by the bed I heard him ask, "What have you been doing?" Fafanda then confessed that he had coveted some coconut palms, and actually claimed them as his own, though he knew they belonged to a neighbour. The family gathered round, and Akwa went on his knees and asked God to take pity on the sufferer.

At the morning service on the following Sunday, Akwa announced the confession and led the congregation in prayer for Fafanda's forgiveness and recovery. Two days later the vomiting ceased, and by the end of the week the patient was back at his work. The villagers were convinced that the confession had been of greater value than my quinine.

On another occasion one of Akwa's parishioners, a man named Malakai, fell ill a few days after he had severely beaten his wife. Akwa had come to her assistance, upbraiding him for his conduct, and had also been threatened. Malakai made no confession and rapidly grew worse. On the third day he became unconscious, a sure sign, according to the natives, that he would die. Akwa was sent for and on arrival at once knelt and prayed that God would restore the sick man to consciousness in order that he might have an opportunity to confess. Within half an hour—I was there all the time—he opened his eyes and recognized the people in the room. Akwa came forward and explained that God was angered by the threats used against the wife and himself,

and begged him to admit his guilt. Malakai did so, and Akwa began to pray for him while those present fell on their knees and joined in. His subsequent recovery was, as usual, taken as proof that the sin mentioned was responsible for the illness.

A third case was much more pathetic. A woman had given birth to a child, and as her family was already large had to begin her household duties again before she was in a fit state to do so. Neighbours used to send in gifts of food, but these were insufficient and she was also doing a little cooking herself. She was so weak that while busy over the fire with the tiny baby in her arms she momentarily lost consciousness and allowed it to fall head first on the red-hot embers, so that it was burnt all over the head and face and down one side. I was sent for but could do nothing except pour olive oil over it, though in any case I felt certain it would be dead within an hour. Unfortunately it lingered in agony for eight days, a sight so piteous that my cook boy vomited after paying a visit of condolence to the parents. The reason given for the accident was the anger of God because on the two preceding Sundays the father had failed to attend church.

In these cases confession was hastened on account of the illness of the persons concerned : normally the sinner waits until the visit of the native priest for the administration of Holy Communion. The sins confessed are, as a rule, well-known to the people in general and are often discussed in the village beforehand. The most common are quarrelling, lying, and laxity in attendance at church services. When the sins are so slight, and are already common property, the priest merely prays in the hearing of the penitent that God will not turn away in wrath. More serious offences, however, may be made public to the congregation on the following Sunday. During my visit a couple confessed to fornication, and as no one else knew what they had done the priest made an announcement before Communion, telling of what had occurred but also explaining that they were contrite and had asked forgiveness. The man subsequently handed over a sum of money to the girl's parents as compensation.

There is a popular belief that a person who partakes of Communion without first confessing his sins will be choked by the wine. Akwa told me he heard this at school in Norfolk

Island, and cited in support the case of a European who fainted at the altar rails and subsequently confessed to adultery. Just before I reached Malu'u a girl let the chalice slip as she was taking it from the priest's hands, and all the wine was spilled. Nothing was said at the time, but in the vestry afterwards both Akwa and the priest commented on the accident, and it was suggested that she was probably hiding some sin. Within a couple of months it became apparent that she was pregnant. A marriage was hastily arranged, although the boy concerned was barely sixteen years of age, and the child was born during my visit.

As amongst the heathens, the only unconfessed sin for which there is a specific penalty is adultery : for this the woman is supposed to run the risk of difficulties in childbirth.

In the Evangelical Mission confession takes place in public, and at the regular services any member of the congregation may stand up and tell of his sins. In addition, every few years groups of Mission authoritics from Sydney tour the islands, and as they visit each station what can only be described as an orgy of confession follows. At one of these an extraordinary incident took place : a man first rose to his feet and confessed that he had been using magic in his garden, and then half an hour later stood up again and announced that his confession was bogus—he had not used magic at all but could think of nothing else to say. He was suspended for six months "for playing with God".

Although the Evangelical teachers visit the sick they do not ask on their own initiative what sins have been committed, since they believe that each man must examine his actions for himself and decide why God is angry. They hear confession in private, however, as soon as the request is made, though this does not in any way bind them to secrecy. When a man became delirious before confessing a short time ago his relatives compiled a catalogue of his sins for the teacher. A special prayer meeting was held, and he recovered shortly afterwards.

Since children can obviously not be guilty of the type of major offence which is believed to bring down divine judgment, the sickness or death of a person of immature years is accounted for by the misdeeds of its parents. Siblings and spouses may also suffer for one another's sins, though this explanation is only put forward if the sick man has led

a more or less blameless life or is closely related to someone notorious for evil living. Peter Ambuosa's adulteries, for example, were held responsible for the deaths of two of his closer relatives, and in another case a woman's death was explained by the fact that her husband, when castigated for his frequent absences from church, packed up his belongings and went to live with some heathen kinsmen. This man is now an example to all and never misses a service.

#### CHRISTIANITY AND CONDUCT

\* The foregoing discussion has demonstrated the close association between native Christianity and certain types of conduct. It is believed that, on the one hand, a premium is offered for compliance with certain rules, and, on the other, penalties for those who disobey.

Many of these rules are in consonance with the old native standards, and the Christians believe that God punishes very much the same type of actions as the *akalo*, such as murder, irregular sexual unions, neglect of ceremonies, etc. The chief difference is that under the Christian code the offences usually cover a wider field. Thus, while the *akalo* punish only the murder of a relative, God is supposed to disapprove of all killing. Many of these actions are also punished by the Administration, so that Christianity in backing, as it inevitably does, the European legal code, in this instance also reinforces the original native system of ethics.

Direct reminders of supernatural rewards and punishments are made use of by parents in the training of their children. In the Evangelical Mission, however, there are so many positive inducements for disobedience that warnings of this kind count for very little.<sup>1</sup> In the Melanesian Mission, on the contrary, the children are still reasonably well behaved, and I had two remarkable instances of the effect of illness on conduct.

A small boy in A'ama was very fond of playing instead of helping his parents with their work. I saw him have his ears boxed twice, but more usually his father merely scolded him and told him how lazy he was. Then he had a bad attack of influenza and was confined to the house for nearly a fortnight. At the request of the father Akwa gave him

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* below, p. 207.

a lecture in which it was explained that the illness was directly tracable to divine wrath at his laziness. After the boy's recovery I used to see him go off to the garden nearly every morning, and his father assured me that the reformation would be permanent.

On another occasion Akwa spoke to his pupils about their habit of turning round in church to stare at late comers. They ought rather to mind their prayers, he said, and pay attention to the service. Shortly afterwards he was called away from the class for a few minutes, and on his return one of the scholars, a boy of thirteen named Rosimboho, was standing in front giving an imitation of his lecture. Not long afterwards this same boy was taken ill. He made no public confession but told an uncle what he had done and sent him to Akwa to ask forgiveness. After his recovery he worked so hard that in a short time he was at the head of the class.

Certain instances of divine punishment are referred to again and again when a case of serious illness gives rise to conversation on the subject. In one a woman was struck by lightning while in the act of stealing a bunch of bananas, and in another a man known to be a thief was taken ill but could not die apparently because he refused to confess. His flesh became so putrid that his relatives had to put scented herbs in the house to counteract the stench. Tales of this kind probably have only a slender foundation in fact, but are so universally believed that they must give added validity to early teachings. An incident which occurred during my own visit may by this time have assumed mythical proportions. A man who had contracted septicaemia of the leg was in a shocking condition before death supervened : he had confessed to some minor fault, but those not closely related to him soon began to say that such a hideous death could only be the result of some secret sin he was determined to hide.

When looked at in retrospect, epidemics are said to be "merely disease", and people are even prepared to admit that they have been spread by personal contacts. An outbreak of influenza while I was on the island was also generally referred to as the "white man's disease", and several natives mentioned that it had probably been brought from Sydney by the steamer. But, at the same time, every single

death was still ascribed to a sin. The relatives usually accepted the "natural" explanation and said that disease alone was responsible, but behind their backs other people pointed out how many times the dead man had offended God. Some of the old folks even looked upon the epidemic as a "judgment", and claimed that the community was being punished as a whole for its laxity.

The natives are sufficiently aware of the "natural" causes of disease not to refuse medical treatment, and I was always being called upon to attend the sick. In communities where European contact has been less intense I have had medicines refused with some such remark as, "That is all right for the white man, but our illnesses are caused by the spirits. If you cure this complaint the spirits will only send another."

#### IMPORTANCE OF CONFESSION

The unpleasant feelings connected with confession before a full congregation were several times described for my benefit. People explained that their mouths sometimes refused to form the words they wished to utter and that their knees shook so much that although they wanted to run away the attempt would have resulted in disaster. It is also a well-known fact that penitents are sometimes unintelligible through nervousness and shame. Yet the publicity is popular, and a number of Anglicans expressed the wish that their own mission would follow the example set by the Evangelicals. The reason given is that voluntary humiliation is a fitting way to show regret. "When I am confessing I am ashamed," stated one informant. "Afterwards my belly feels good because the people now know I am sorry for my offence." "A man is ashamed and miserable at confession," said another. "His reputation is made small; people point at him for his offence. But they also say, 'He must be a good man; he has made himself small before us all; he is not proud.'" The ordeal, it would appear, is looked upon both as an expiation and a method of restoring lost self esteem. At the same time, I have never myself heard a penitent praised for his action, and outside the church most confessions are followed only by gossip, often of the most malicious type.

On occasion public confession may have a cathartic value, as the following examples will demonstrate. One morning a man rose to his feet in the Irombule church and in an unfaltering voice said, "I have done wrong. I have been angry. I was vexed with my neighbour because he stole some of my taro. I am now no longer angry. I am sorry. He can keep my taro. I ask that you will all pray for my forgiveness." Although this man's motives may have been of the best—I did not know him well enough to ask—it is at least possible that he was merely giving outlet to his rage. If his aim was to bring obloquy on the thief he certainly achieved it.

On another Sunday, Peter Ambuofa created a sensation by a similar sort of "confession". "I have done wrong and am sorry," he began. "I was angry with Shem. He is restoring bride-price, which I abolished. I was angry because when he married I was a Mission elder and he gave nothing for his wife." I was not present myself but was given an account of what had happened immediately afterwards. Shem hid his head in great confusion, and before Peter had time to ask those present to pray for him the woman ran outside crying. Maekali's wife followed to convey sympathy and found her muttering, "Shem must pay now, but who can he pay? My parents are both dead."

The belief that confession is followed by the forgiveness of the sin may also have a beneficial effect on illness. The patient, after unburdening himself, thinks he will recover and is thus encouraged to exert his own will to do so.

There is, however, an unpleasant side. One Sunday a man I knew well, a young widower of about thirty, came to see me immediately after service and declared with great gusto that he had just confessed to the seduction of a single girl. Her name had not been disclosed to the congregation, though he told me who she was. I had the impression that he had used confession to gratify his vanity, for he seemed to be tremendously pleased with himself at the public declaration of his prowess as a lover. Telling me of what he had done was probably a further exhibitionist gesture, though I did learn later that in church his demeanour had been suitably humble.

The bogus confession already referred to is another indication that the ceremony is liable to abuse.

## WHEN FACTS AND BELIEF ARE NOT IN HARMONY

In spite of the belief that sinners will be punished with illness, sometimes the ungodly in Malaita, as elsewhere, flourish beyond their deserts. Native health is so bad that this seldom happens, but I myself know of two cases.

I was discussing this subject with Kwanggaina'o at the time when a man who was more or less notorious had, on a technical point, won a case brought against him by a neighbour in the district officer's Court. I quote his statement : " You ask me why bad men prosper ? Well, look here. Some men go to church with their loin cloths only. Do you understand me ? They pray to God with their lips only : they look at the *akalo* with their eyes, and their hearts are still heathen. No, they do not make sacrifices, but they are not truly Christian. God does not punish them now because they are not His true followers. But I tell you, friend, that at the last day He will send them to hell with Satan." The person in question was a man of this type, and in the end would get his proper reward.

As proof of his argument Kwanggaina'o cited the fact that during the serious pneumonic influenza epidemic of 1918-1919 more persons died in the mission areas than amongst the heathens. God had killed those who had been baptized and then failed to become proper Christians. The logic of this explanation is open to question, but it indicates that apparently contradictory facts can always be twisted to support the accepted theory.

Armed with this opinion I approached the man who had lost the Court case. He agreed that the sinner would burn for ever and took great delight in describing what his sufferings were going to be. This account, in fact, was by far the best I recorded of what hell is like. As the man was unable in present circumstances to take vengeance, he had found a substitute reaction, I gathered, in gloating on his enemy's probable fate in the hereafter. He had obviously given the matter some thought and was able to give me a long list of the sinner's minor misfortunes, such as that a pig had just died, that a few seasons before blight had destroyed his taro, and that his son had quarrelled with him and gone away to work on a plantation.

Men who regard themselves as blameless are also able to

reconcile their misfortunes with their religious beliefs : they usually imagine that God is testing their faith. Aningali's case is typical of many. Although for years a pillar of the Evangelical Mission, he has been dogged by misfortune. Even those who dislike him personally admit what a good old man he is, but he has been degraded from the position of *ngwane-inoto* to poverty and has lost all his children save one daughter. The eldest son died in the prime of life, and this one surviving daughter has married a ne'er-do-well. When I was nursing him through an illness he spent hours comparing himself with Job.

It is unnecessary to add that although many persons declare that God is testing them, others are usually of the opinion that they are reaping a just reward for past misdeeds.

#### RESEMBLANCES BETWEEN NATIVE CHRISTIANITY AND THE HEATHEN RELIGION

The parallel between the new and the old religions of Malaita is by no means confined to beliefs associated with the concept of *mamanaa*. Thus there is also a close analogy in the use of the word *ambu*, sacred. It applies, on the one hand, to the *akalo* and their belongings and, on the other, to God and everything with which He is connected. A heathen who has come into contact with the *akalo* shares their sanctity for a time and in consequence abstains from mundane tasks and cohabitation with his wife : a Christian who has approached God is in the same way touched by His sanctity and has also to avoid mundane tasks and cohabitation. This sacredness applies especially to persons who have attended Communion, and for some days they are actually referred to, in the Melanesian Mission, as the " *ambu ones* ". Native teachers, like heathen priests, are also supposed to take precautions after special services.

The prohibition on living a normal life after Communion is rationalized, however, and the reason given is as follows. " Married couples may cohabit every night, but the Holy Sacrament is offered only at rare intervals. They wish, therefore, to make these occasions important." Difficulties during parturition and illness are said to follow when couples indulge too soon.

The word *sua*, ritually unclean, applied mainly to menstrual

blood, has been abandoned, but women during their periods are still regarded as defiling, and although husband and wife no longer have separate dwellings, they still sleep apart in different rooms. No man would ever cohabit with his wife while she is menstruating, and she always refrains at that time from attending church. These prohibitions, again, are rationalized, and people say that sexual intercourse during menstruation would be disgusting, and that the women keep away from the church for fear of making a mess on the seat.

A Christian woman also goes into seclusion when she gives birth to a child. She remains in an inner room of the dwelling-house for three days, and then, although she may leave this room, is forbidden for seven days more to go outside into the homestead. In the Melanesian Mission she is ritually welcomed into the church on the eleventh day by the teacher, who thanks God for her deliverance and prays for the future well-being of the child. Afterwards she generally gives a shilling to Church funds.

If *sua* has been dropped, the word *mbilia*, the ordinary—as opposed to the ritual—term for dirty, is now in some contexts used in its place. One reason why sin is followed by loss of *mamanaa*, for example, is that the person's heart is now *mbilia*. Confession serves to wipe out this stain, and allows the person once more to approach God unsullied.

It is impossible to believe that Christianity has been deliberately taught in this form by missionaries. Indeed, those with whom I discussed the matter were unaware of how their teachings had been construed and were of the opinion that their converts held exactly the same views as themselves. Yet it would be a mistake to say that the islanders have consciously adapted what they were taught to suit themselves. What has happened is that the new religion has been squeezed into the old mould. Teachings which were not understood, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, or were incapable of alteration, were simply ignored.

A comparison with Guadalcanal is of interest in this connection. On this island confession had no place in the old religion, and converts to-day are most reluctant to adopt the custom.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This statement refers only to that portion of Guadalcanal with which I am personally acquainted, namely the north-east coast near Longgu village.

Malaita Christians even have magic—or rather, their reaction to certain prayers corresponds closely with the heathen attitude to magical spells. Thus, although in the central church at Irombule the Evangelical converts pray for general benefits for the community as a whole, in the smaller meeting houses they as a rule make particular requests for themselves. In one settlement, when it was thought that a man who had fallen from a tall tree might die of his injuries, prayers were offered every two hours—and the anxiety of his relatives appeared to be considerably relieved in consequence. On another occasion a family held an extra long prayer meeting because the taro appeared to be withering after several days of continued dry weather. I was also informed that a man living in another part of the country prayed that the meat of a pig he was going to kill would be sufficient for all his guests. This was apparently regarded as a perfectly normal procedure.

Attendance at church also has at times a magical aim. Although Aningali was usually content to visit the Irombule church only on Sundays, he managed to drag himself to the mid-week meeting when he was ill. He had told me on the previous evening that he thought he would never recover, but after the service came to my house specially to let me know how much better he felt.

The ceremony held one morning before the departure of the mission vessel *Evangel*, which had been paying a visit to Malu'u, was also very similar to a magical performance. Prayers were offered for the safety of all on board, and the congregation then joined in singing the following hymn.

"Lord be with Thine own *Evangel*,  
Going forth at Thy command,  
Keeping safe from reef and tempest,  
In the hollow of Thy hand."

"Richly bless boat's crew and captain,  
Keep the engine running well,  
Day by day around each island,  
Give new power Thy word to tell."

"Lord protect all mission launches,  
Keep them safe upon the sea,  
Greatly use them for Thy glory,  
In whatever place they be."

If the names of *akalo* were substituted for "Lord" and a few other alterations made this might almost be a spell uttered by a magician to ensure the safety of a fleet of trading canoes.

Finally, the Christians have their own form of sorcery. The Missions strongly disapprove of the practice, and a special sermon on the subject was delivered by a native teacher during my visit, but many converts have no hesitation in asking God to visit those who have injured them with death and misfortune. One man told me that he took as his example the psalmist who invoked God against his enemies with the words, "Let their eyes be darkened that they see not. Pour out Thine indignation upon them, and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them." I also observed that, in private, people were usually somewhat complacent about the illnesses of those they did not like, even though they may have offered sympathy in public.

People who do not pray for the downfall of their enemies seem to derive satisfaction from abasing themselves and assuming the rôle of martyrs. I have mentioned the case of Malakai who used to beat his wife : she used to tell us all continually that she willingly forgave him his faults and would cling to him even if a sentence of imprisonment were passed upon him. There was also a man who actually made a gift to a thief who had stolen some of his taro. On presenting it he made a little speech saying that if he were a heathen he would want vengeance, but as a Christian he wished only to turn the other cheek and be generous to those who wronged him. This was, in addition, an effective way of publicly shaming the thief.

The explanation offered by converts for the similarities between the two religions is that Satan, who is the author of all heathen practices, imitates God. The *akalo*, they say, have no existence, but the sacrifices are accepted by Satan, who in return exerts his *mamanaa* on behalf of the worshippers. In so far as they lead to success heathen practices are thus regarded as perfectly valid, even though the source of the *mamanaa* is misunderstood. The advantage of Christianity is its promise of heaven. Heathens who refuse to join a mission are supposed to be inevitably destined for hell, though what will happen to those who had no opportunity to do so is not known. "But doubtless God will deal justly with them."

The heathens themselves, even when they scorn Christianity, regard it as a valid religion. They are convinced of the existence of their own *akalo* but admit that God may also be a spirit possessed of *mamanaa*. At the same time, they do question the reality of heaven. Whoever saw a dead man return to earth?—they ask. How, then, can anyone have information about the afterworld? They point out, moreover, that although Christians are always saying how good they are, they steal, fornicate, and tell lies—a charge that is not without some foundation.

## CHAPTER IX

### MISSIONS AND NATIVE SOCIAL LIFE

Malaita Christianity, partly no doubt because its roots are so firmly planted in the heathen past, is in harmony, generally speaking, with native life, and in its formal aspects has been well integrated with the activities of the people. But in establishing the new religion—or, alternatively, in modifying an old one—missions have sometimes been in conflict, though not always consciously, with institutions not specifically religious, such as bride-price, to quote an example which has been referred to already. In this chapter we shall investigate the results of these conflicts.

The subject of missions, however, is a difficult one to discuss, since criticism is usually met with an accusation of prejudice—often with reason. Many island residents, for example, are definitely hostile to missions and have nothing to say in their favour. I hope I shall be found to be unbiased, for certainly I am not opposed on principle to the conversion of the natives ; but I do believe that the conduct of individual missionaries is at times shortsighted in the light of what modern research has revealed of the reaction of primitive peoples to earlier attempts at conversion.<sup>1</sup>

#### MISSION RIVALRIES

The visitor to Malu'u soon notices that the followers of the two Missions cherish no great love for one another. Their ill-feeling is to some extent aggravated by the circumstance that practically all the Melanesian Mission converts belong to a district which used frequently to be at enmity with Uala. Such hostility has in other areas actually resulted in an invitation to a rival mission to establish a station. At Longgu village in Guadalcanal, for instance, where there are only 170 inhabitants, one of the leading men, after a

<sup>1</sup> This view is, of course, shared by many leaders of missionary thought,  
*Vide Chapter XI.*

quarrel with his neighbours, invited Roman Catholic missionaries to build a church on his ground, although Anglican and Evangelical teachers were already resident in the district.

Doctrine, as had been mentioned, does not form a subject for quarrels, nor, in fact, do any disputes arise directly out of religious matters. But when two persons belonging to different Missions have an argument for some other reason, they sooner or later begin insulting one another's beliefs. Other people may join in, and the two sides have been known to come to blows. The teachers nowadays intervene and chide their followers, but I was informed that Akwa's predecessor used instead to urge them on to give their opponents a drubbing.

Baptism provides perhaps the most fruitful subject for insults. The Evangelicals accuse the Anglicans of allowing persons into the Christian brotherhood in infancy when they cannot possibly know anything about God, and the Anglicans reply by ridiculing the sorry spectacle presented by the adults after complete immersion. The broader views and greater tolerance of the Melanesian Mission is another subject of contention, since the Evangelicals stigmatize the attitude as a reversion to heathenism. The Anglicans are also regarded as intruders by their rivals, who point out, however, that their Mission was established long before the birth of anyone now living and generations before Miss Young's visit to the Solomons in 1900. The fact that their leader is a bishop, who has prestige amongst Europeans, is also a source of boasting.

The history of Christian missions in the Pacific is full of bitter sectarianism leading not infrequently to warfare, in which the converts were encouraged, and sometimes provided with ammunition, by European missionaries.<sup>1</sup> I have been informed by two district officers that in the western Solomons, Methodists and Seventh Day Adventists still (1934) burn down one another's churches. In Malaita the relations between the authorities of the Melanesian and Evangelical Missions fortunately are amicable enough, but it seems that the risk of some undignified spectacle at least has always to be taken into account when more than one organization is established in a small area.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide p. 135, footnote 2.*

## SCHOOLS

The observant visitor is also very soon unfavourably impressed with the effect of attendance at school on the conduct of the young people. I first noticed the difference between Christian and heathen children when making my initial visit to the interior of the island. Previously, having known only Christians, I had concluded that all Malaita children were badly behaved : here, to my surprise, I found them speaking respectfully to their parents and doing what they were told. When I mentioned how unexpectedly this was my host replied, " You have been living with mission folk : you have seen only Christian children. They are all lazy and impudent. Up here in the hills our children are the same now as we were ourselves long ago. That is why I am not a Christian. I want my children to grow up as good men."

On my return to Malu'u I raised the subject with Christian informants, who agreed that the schools are responsible for the change. I then began to make observations for myself and came to the same conclusion.

Until the seventh year, when formal education begins, most of the children are obedient and respectful, but the effects of the school are observable almost at once, and within a year or two, in the Evangelical Mission, parents are openly flouted. The reasons are not far to seek.

First, there is association with companions who in any circumstances would have been young ruffians. For this there is probably no remedy. The heathen method of education is adapted to small homesteads where children are necessarily few, but between 150 and 200 come to school at Irombule, often from long distances.

More important is the new love for games and visiting. Wandering about is effectively prevented in the heathen community by fears of sorcery, but the Christians no longer have such dangers to face. Lessons finish at noon, and, instead of returning home to help their parents, most of the boys prefer to remain and play for the afternoon (Plate XXIIb). The net of kinship relations is so widespread that they are always able to beg a meal when they are hungry. Meetings are also arranged in different settlements for days when there is no school, with the result that little time is now spent

either in the garden or at home. A boy who has been upbraided by his parents has no compunction about leaving them for a few days and going off with a companion, so that adults can be set at naught and every unpleasant situation avoided. One lad I knew was fetched home by his mother after an absence of a fortnight. "Do you learn to do this at school?" she asked. "No, it is my business," he rudely replied. On arrival his father gave him a spanking—and he ran away immediately for ten days more.

The teachers are able to maintain excellent control in school with their canes, but attempts to make the children go straight home have so far met with not the slightest success. Prefects, known as *insasi*, a corruption of "in charge", proved to be worse than useless, and even Maekali, having made several fruitless efforts, has given up trying. "In my own Mission not one child, not one, is obedient!" he once exclaimed in despair—actually a slight exaggeration.

Some time ago, Kwanggaina'o addressed a crowd outside the church and suggested that a way out of the difficulty would be to refuse the children food unless they had legitimate business. Those who live close to the school have been compelled to do this in self defence, and he hoped that if everyone adopted the same attitude wanderers would be forced home by hunger. But so firmly engrained is the convention that generosity to relatives is imperative, that people were ashamed to refuse. As one man put it, "A child I call 'my son' sits and watches my basket while I eat. How can I say 'Go home!' when already it is night and his house is far away? They would say I was mean and my reputation would diminish."

Kwanggaina'o's address, however, did bear some fruit. A few weeks later a gang of twenty-eight boys climbed some of his palms and stole six coconuts each. He raged and stormed, but redress was impossible.

The adults are for some reason under the impression that once they have accepted Christianity the Administration would object if they prevented their offspring from attending school, and the teachers would also regard such an action in all probability as a sin. I overheard one of them saying in public that it is better for a boy to know his Bible and be disobedient than for him to be ignorant and respectful.

Amongst the Anglicans this situation has not yet developed to the same extent, since they are all concentrated in A'ama, close to the school. In the Evangelical Mission parents also have the strongest motives for insisting on the return of their daughters immediately after lessons, and in consequence, girls are always far better behaved than boys. In a large house the mother has to have some help to complete all the work ; moreover, a girl who is notoriously lazy has difficulty in finding a husband.

## MISSIONS AND CHASTITY

Another reason why parents exercise care where a daughter is concerned is the thought that she may be seduced, a fear that is by no means groundless, as is proved by the case of Sakuma, the girl who spilled the Communion wine. The boy responsible for her pregnancy, a youth named Kiuui (Q-E, his baptismal name), recognized by everyone as sub-normal, was not yet sixteen years of age. Maekali told me of another girl of fifteen who confessed to seduction by a schoolboy.

An incident in my own household illustrates the earlier development of interest in sexual matters among the young people in mission areas. Lensin, one of my servants, a boy of fourteen, bought a love charm from a native of the western Solomons, a member of the crew of a trading schooner which had spent the night in Malu'u harbour. Instead of keeping quiet, he boasted of what he had done to a friend, who promptly spread the information. There was a scandal, and a relative who lived nearby—Lensin's father's house was some distance away—compelled him to destroy the charm. He explained that he had heard the older boys at school talking of sexual intercourse and wished to try it for himself.

On another occasion I overheard a group of youths debating whether fornication was really forbidden. The Commandments made no mention of it, some of them pointed out, but one produced his Bible and quoted a text stating that "no whoremonger or unclean person" shall enter into the kingdom of heaven (Ephesians v, 5). The others replied that "unclean person" did not necessarily mean someone who had indulged in sexual intercourse. Finally, a teacher was appealed to and

settled the matter by turning up the text, "That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication" (Acts xv, 29).

Choir practice, which used to take place at Irombule on two nights every week, caused the greatest worry, since the lonely walks home in the dark gave the best possible opportunity for rendezvous. The young folk assembled at seven o'clock and should, officially, have dispersed again at nine, but I often heard them singing at eleven and occasionally saw small parties still talking at one in the morning.

The elders became so concerned that they began to agitate for practice during the daytime, but before a decision was made the choirmaster, Funui, was involved in a scandal and had to leave Malu'u in disgrace.

Nowadays when an intrigue is discovered the teachers and parents usually insist on the marriage of the couple. Sakuma, for instance, was forced into a match with the mentally deficient juvenile Kiuii, who was quite incapable of providing her with a home. Members of the older generation were horrified by the affair and complained at being prevented from putting him to death. The relatives of a youth who was betrothed to the boy's sister signified their disapproval by breaking off the marriage arrangements, and Sakuma received a severe beating from a brother very much her senior who then refused to speak to her for three months.

These forced marriages are seldom satisfactory and, in general, simply invite infidelity. In this particular case there could be no hope of a successful outcome. The girl's reputation, however, is to a certain extent saved, and the transfer of wealth legitimizes the children. The youth accepts the marriage under pressure, partly on account of the reduced bride-price—Kiuii's relatives handed over only two *tafuli'ae*—and partly to avoid possible imprisonment. He is always suspended from church membership for a time, but the period is reduced if he marries the girl. In the Evangelical Mission the names of the offenders are given out in church, together with their sentence, and they are then exhorted to repent and ask for God's mercy.

I know of only one case where—on account of his extreme youth—the girl's mother refused to allow marriage with the seducer. The couple had been reported by some children who had watched their embraces, but the girl was not

pregnant. The elders are now able to regard her as a living example of God's vengeance for she had the misfortune to contract some disease which has made her flesh wither like that of an old woman. The boy was sent off to a plantation.

#### MISSIONS AND BRIDE-PRICE

In the early days of the Evangelical Mission, when Peter Ambuofa was still the leader, payment of bride-price was definitely forbidden. He argued that no such payments were made in the marriages mentioned in the Bible, and that when God created Eve He gave her to Adam demanding nothing in return. The attempt to acquire honour by giving away many *tafuli'ae* was also, he decided, un-Christian, especially since Europeans gave nothing at all.

The European missionary in residence at the time probably agreed to this ruling without realizing the many ramifications of the custom. Its true significance is still imperfectly understood, and I have myself heard a missionary deplore the fact that the natives have such little regard for their women as to buy and sell them like pigs. He was under the impression that the transfer of valuables gives the husband the right to treat his wife just as he pleases. This, as we know, is so far from the truth that her family intervenes if she is not shown proper respect. The economic side of the transaction must not be ignored, but it must also not be over-emphasized. The natives themselves, while they regard this aspect as important, refer to the proceeding by a different word from that used to describe a purchase. In the first case the verb is *fofo'ea*, the name of one of the presentations, in the second *usia*. This word, now extended to buying trade goods, comes from the market: to barter vegetables for fish is (to) *usia*.

It is reported from the area slightly to the south-east that many men now have to remain single, since, amongst the heathens, bride-price has of late years been increased,<sup>1</sup> a development which has also been of widespread occurrence in Africa where money is now in general use. In north

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Ivens, *Island Builders of the Pacific*, London, 1930, p. 46. *Vide* also N. C. Deck (of the South Sea Evangelical Mission) and H. I. Hogbin, correspondence in *Oceania*, vol. v, pp. 242-5, 368-370, 488-9.

Malaita, however, I found no evidence of it. But even if bride-price had been increased, that would be no reason for anyone remaining unwed, since young men have always had to depend upon contributions made by their relatives. The elders give willingly, thereby not only discharging any obligation incurred by acceptance of the young men's labour in the past, but also ensuing that they will continue to receive assistance in the future. Contributions to marriage presentations are therefore to be looked upon as part of the reciprocal stream of obligations of kindred, in line with the help given in clearing land for new gardens and the mutual co-operation to avenge injuries. Further, parents do not hoard the bride-price received for their daughters, but distribute it amongst their relatives, so that if wealth flows out of the kinship group when the men marry it flows back again with the wedding of the girls. If a man is single beyond the usual age it may be taken for granted either that he has no wish to marry—and I have never met such an individual myself—or that he is so lazy that no one will help him.

Peter Ambuofa's continued insistence that bride-price must be abolished led to a serious split in the Irombule Mission. Until this time he had been a sort of *ngwane-moto* supported and assisted by everybody, especially Aningali. Aningali was in favour of bride-price and urged that any arguments against it were invalid. ("As for Adam, could he pay *tafuli'ae* to God ?") He spoke publicly in favour of its retention in Peter's hearing, with the result that they came to blows. The bystanders separated them, but Aningali subsequently moved away from Irombule and built a house elsewhere. For a long period he would have nothing to do with Peter and refused to join in any mission activities except church services.

In spite of the mission rule a great many followed Aningali's example and continued to pay and demand bride-price. This lack of uniformity caused endless confusion and bitter arguments. Some demanded bride-price, and some were insulted when it was offered ; some regarded it as a just and reasonable proceeding, and some thought it an imposition. At last, in about 1929, the resident missionary and Shem, the native head teacher, decided on a compromise. The amount to be paid was fixed at three *tafuli'ae*, and it was decreed that no one was ever to give more.

The effects of the original interference were disastrous, and the new decree has not served to mend matters in the least. We have noticed already that the authority of the old men is being undermined. In the heathen community, however, the dependence of the young people on their elders for bride-price contributions still acts as a certain check on their conduct. But three *tafuli'ae* can easily be secured from the Langalanga traders in exchange for only two pigs—or may even be bought for cash earned as wages. It is still recognized that a man's bride-price ought to be furnished by his relatives, but the fact that he can provide it himself if they refuse to do so means that the elders have lost their most valuable weapon.

The A'ama mission has not interfered in any way with marriage arrangements, and the converts pay as many *tafuli'ae* as they wish. On Ysabel, north of Malaita, nevertheless, the Anglicans are responsible for a somewhat ludicrous situation. According to Solomon Island Regulations marriage is legal so long as the ceremony is (*a*) carried out according to native custom, or (*b*) performed by a minister of religion who is registered by the Administration. The Melanesian Mission has been established on Ysabel for seventy years and as the people are nominally all Christians the native custom, payment of bride-price, is no longer carried out, a ceremony in church having been substituted. The difficulty is that the officiating clergy are native priests, whom the Administration declines to register. The consequence is that not one person on the island is legally married : all are living in sin. They have the blessing of the church, but that of the law is denied them, so that the district officer can neither sanction divorce nor punish adultery.

Neither the Evangelical nor the Melanesian Mission sanctions divorce, but as in former times marriages were seldom dissolved this has not caused the same hardship in Malaita as in some of the other islands.

Polygamy is also forbidden, though a number of natives mentioned to me that they could find no such prohibition, except for deacons, in the Bible. Some of them even pointed out, as did Milton long ago, that, to judge from such examples as Abraham, God appears to have approved most heartily of his worshippers taking several wives.

## THE PRESENT

## MISSIONS AND FEASTS

In the case of the Evangelical Mission a final blow to the authority of the elders has been given by the active discouragement of feasting. Funeral feasts were forbidden from the outset on account of their association with the spirits, but in earlier days Peter Ambuosa and Aningali used to organize distributions of food on the occasion of church festivals, such as Easter and Christmas. They themselves provided the bulk of the pigs and taro, but the whole congregation made individual contributions, and one Easter over seventy pigs were killed. The quarrel between the two men was almost certainly aggravated by jealousy and the fact that each strove to outdo the other in generosity.

The native leaders who succeeded Peter after his disgrace decided for the abolition of feasting on the grounds that the display of food ministered to vanity and caused general ill-feeling owing to the rivalry involved. In their view desire to acquire prestige and reputation was unworthy of Christians, and some were also of the opinion that anything which took people's minds away from the true worship of the Almighty was to be deplored. Like the early Calvinists, they thought that everything which was not directly connected with God was evil.

These opinions were placed before the resident missionary, and it was formally agreed to prohibit all feasts. According to informants the missionary gave as additional reasons that festivals involved a waste of time which could better be spent in the gardens, and that many people ate too much and became ill.

This decision was accepted without dissension by all the adherents of the Mission, and feasts are now a thing of the past. The prohibition of dancing, an essential feature of heathen feasts, was also received without comment. People were influenced by the fact that all the more important festivals were associated with sacrifices to the spirits, and it is a commonplace that converts to a new religion usually regard all their old beliefs and practices as harmful and evil.

Since authority and leadership are traditionally dependant upon the giving of feasts, it follows that in the Evangelical Mission no one can to-day rise to the position of *ngwane-inoto*.

Teachers with whom I discussed the point regarded this as a matter for congratulation. A *ngwane-inoto*, they said, was always too proud, and, moreover, all Christians ought to be equal. This view was probably their own interpretation of the Scriptures, since it is improbable that the Mission would encourage the doctrine that all should be equal in wealth. They altogether overlooked the fact that *ngwane-inoto* fulfilled the useful function of maintaining order and acting as leaders in economic matters, and themselves derived little direct gain from their wealth. The food they provided was distributed throughout the community, and their feasts were a source of diversion, recreation, and pleasurable interest. Further, they were always ready to provide food and shelter for widows and orphans, who, in many cases to-day, have difficulty in securing adequate sustenance.

Even if feasts were still permitted, however, the ban on polygamy would have meant that persons with ambition would find it difficult to cultivate a sufficiently large garden to be recognized as a *ngwane-inoto*.

That the Mission has failed to realize the fundamental significance of feasts is proved by the expression of the opinion that they create an interruption to routine work. As has been mentioned, the desire to make a good showing is the principal spur to industry.

The explanations which the natives informed me are given for certain passages in the New Testament also indicate misunderstanding. In the translation the phrase *ngwane ne rikii* is used for "rich man". Now, although this is literally "man of riches", the last word being a phonetic transcription of the local pronunciation of the word "riches", I was told that missionaries have said that "it is the same as *ngwane-inoto*". Converts are thus instructed that it is harder for a *ngwane-inoto* to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle.<sup>1</sup> This and similar texts, indeed, are quoted as arguments against the whole *ngwane-inoto* institution, though fortunately the people are still sufficiently illogical to regard generosity as the major virtue.

I do not wish to criticize missionary translations unfairly, for they have been carried out with infinite patience, and

<sup>1</sup> I failed to make inquiries concerning local theories with respect to camels. In the passages Mark x, 25, and Luke xviii, 25, the word is translated *kamela*.

the result in many cases is a fine piece of literature. I myself could never have acquired a knowledge of the T'o'ambaita language without the translation of the New Testament, and I take this opportunity to acknowledge my debt. It is also obvious that a missionary who has lived in one particular place for many years has a better chance of finding out linguistic niceties than an anthropological field worker whose stay is necessarily short. But the above example shows clearly how native custom can be misunderstood by persons who "can speak the language" but have no knowledge of sociology. It is only fair to add that the difficulty has in part been realized, and all translations are subject to continual revision.<sup>1</sup>

Mackali once suggested that the hostility of the teachers to the *ngwane-inoto* is probably due in part to self interest, and with this opinion I am inclined to agree. Peter Ambuofa was a *ngwane ne rikii* (rich man), but native teachers have far more work to do nowadays, and in consequence are able to spend only a small proportion of their time in the gardens. The Melanesian Mission pays its teachers a small salary, and the Evangelical converts also make weekly contributions of food, but teachers are never by any standards wealthy. Yet they have considerable authority ; they take the lead in religious matters, are often called upon to settle civil disputes, and punish wrongdoers by turning them out of the mission. A convert with great wealth would obviously be a rival to be reckoned with.

#### MISSIONS AND SORCERY

The acceptance of Christianity has meant that faith in magic of the old type is rapidly being abandoned, though confessions of having practised it are still made occasionally. I had convincing proof, nevertheless, that many people continue to believe in its efficacy. When Lensin bought the love charm I asked the man who made him destroy it why he

<sup>1</sup> Dr. W. G. Ivens informs me that he knows of 500-600 errors in the Florida translation of the Book of Common Prayer although missionaries have been working on it for fifty years.

As a contrast to the above example I give the following instance of a particularly happy translation. As the natives had no word for glory the expression *laat*, meaning light (cf. the common Oceanic *la* = the sun), was intensified by duplication. Glory then is *laalaa*; a great and mighty light.

PLATE XXIV



"TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED"



was making such a fuss if magic was of use only to the heathen. Although this man had been a Christian for twenty years he solemnly assured me that love charms could be used to influence affection and gave several instances to back up his point.

From two or three confessions which I investigated I judge that magic is used when a man is moved by very strong desire. He feels at the time that he is justified in going to any length to achieve what he wants and only develops a sense of guilt afterwards.

Precautions against misfortune magic and against sorcery are being given up. It was assumed at first that Christians would not employ evil spells against one another, but prudence was still exercised at the market, which is also attended by heathens, and in bush settlements. Most of the old people continue to exercise caution, but the opinion is growing amongst the young that evil magic is powerless against Christianity, and many of them now take not the slightest care to dispose of their food remains even when in the presence of heathens with whom they are not at all familiar. They chew betel-nut and throw the husks anywhere, convinced that they have a strong shield against all spirit familiars.

I would not argue that Christians are on this account happier : the heathens soon develop the habit of taking care of themselves and then cease to think about sorcery, except on odd occasions, as, for example, the death of a close relative. At such times, it is true, they are afraid ; but the Christians at intervals are equally in fear of God's vengeance. The significant fact about the abandonment of sorcery is rather that reprisals are no longer considered necessary after deaths. Disease is supposed to be caused by supernatural agencies working by themselves, and as a human being is not responsible no endeavour is made to carry out revenge.

The loss of faith in misfortune magic, however, is causing a great increase in thieving. Spells to produce ill-health, it will be remembered, served to prevent interference with property, and owners performed a rite over their gardens and orchards in the belief that if afterwards a thief stole the vegetables or fruit he would fall a victim to disease. Nowadays all that can be done is to nail up a notice warning off trespassers. Plate XXIV shows one of these boards, the text of which reads, " You are forbidden to cut down this

ivory-nut palm, by order, 'Tavo'a." Some notices add a provisional curse, and on one tree I read, "These trees were not planted for nothing. If you steal the fruit may it give you a sore mouth." On another there was merely the ominous warning, "If anyone. . .!" But as there is no way of enforcing respect for property the notices are actually useless.

#### MISSIONARIES AND THE ADMINISTRATION

Most missionaries, while they may criticize particular officers and individual Regulations, are prepared to recognize that government is not their concern and in consequence never meddle with the Administration. At times, nevertheless, the divergence in the principles enforced by the two different agencies of European contact leads to unfortunate results. I quote the following case as an illustration, since the effect on the community was very noticeable; but, at the same time, I wish it to be clearly understood that I am not implying a charge against the missionary concerned. He probably would have had a different story to tell, but we did not meet, and I had no opportunity to discuss the matter. I was also unable to check any of the statements of the natives directly involved, as they were from a different part of the island and personally unknown to me.

A short time after my arrival at Malu'u the district officer came round on patrol, and, in the course of our conversation, told me of a case he had heard in Court the previous day. A young Christian girl, Ana Nduari'i by name, had been married with due ceremony a few months before to a heathen youth. Soon afterwards the husband took a temporary job, which was to last for three weeks, with a European, but on his return found his wife gone. A missionary had visited the settlement during his absence and, since marriage between Christians and heathens is disapproved, ordered her to go back to her parents. The husband, therefore, made a petition for the issue of a Court order compelling her to return. This the girl had apparently now obeyed.

Four or five months later the district officer again visited Malu'u, this time with both Ana Nduari'i and the youth in his train. He informed me that the latter had come to the district station with the story that the missionary had visited the settlement once more and carried the girl off to the

mission hospital several miles away. Police were therefore dispatched to fetch her, and a full investigation was to be held.

I sat in Court while the girl told her story. She had been willing to marry the youth, she stated, and had not been forced into the match by her relatives. They had lived together for two months, and she agreed to leave him only when the missionary told her that she would burn in hell if she did not return home.

Again she was ordered to go back to her husband. As she left the Court, however, she muttered to a friend, "The missionary said he would have the district officer dismissed if he ordered me to live with that heathen man." This was reported to the Court, and she was at once put under arrest and charged with bringing the Administration into contempt. She swore that these were the missionary's words, but a fine of ten shillings was imposed.

Although the two parties were unknown to me, most of the Malu'u folk seemed to be acquainted with them, and the sentence was discussed with considerable heat for several days. Opinion was more or less evenly divided, but some of those who held that the district officer had been unjust affirmed their belief that the missionary would carry out his alleged threat. As ill luck would have it changes were made in the Administrative staff during the following month, and the officer was transferred to Fiji. By that time I was preparing to leave myself, but I have little doubt that Ana Nduari'i and many others considered that he had been dismissed.

The divergencies between Church and State sometimes lead to the natives playing the one off against the other. An instance of this was provided by the land dispute already referred to between Uala and Alilo.<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Akwa, the head of the A'ama mission, had been the Alilo spokesman, and on the delivery of the verdict in favour of Uala he stepped forward and said to the district officer, "I shall speak to the bishop about this. I shall tell him the land is ours. The bishop knows what is true and what is false." His object, no doubt, was intimidation, and on this occasion he met with no success: indeed, he was fortunate to escape without a fine.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* above, p. 147-8.

## CHAPTER X

### SOCIAL LIFE TO-DAY

I have given an account of the various factors which have been responsible for changes in the life of Malaita and indicated what these have been. It now remains to make a general comparison between the Malaita of yesterday and the Malaita of to-day. A sharp distinction will necessarily have to be drawn between the Christian community and the heathens.

#### KINSHIP

When discussing the Malaita of yesterday we found that the whole social system was closely bound up with the kinship structure. This is not only still true, but the kinship structure itself has changed very little, and all that was said of the privileges and obligations of relatives applies also to the Malaita of to-day. Kinship, in fact, is the most conservative factor in native life.

The family remains the basis of the whole fabric, and the members of this small circle are bound together by a variety of ties which survive right up to, and even beyond, death itself. The garden is still the family stronghold, and although the menfolk may have their own house, all meet together in the women's dwelling for some portion of the day. Property is also held in common, and in dealings with other groups the family generally acts as a unit.

With the exception of the Anglicans at A'ama, the whole community continues to live in small settlements, as a rule made up of about four or five families. Friendliness within the settlement is encouraged by the fact that the children are taught to treat all the residents as members of the family. These persons are in many ways mutually dependant, and their amity in consequence, so far as outward appearances are concerned, endures beyond childhood into adult life. Even with steel tools it is still practically impossible, for

instance, to build a house or clear the ground for a new garden without assistance, and the dealings of any one individual with outsiders are also regarded as the personal concern of everyone in his settlement. Further, close neighbours are in the habit of collaborating to carry out religious ceremonies : amongst the heathens they periodically make themselves responsible for a sacrifice, and in the mission area they meet together daily for prayers in their own little church.

The whole community retains an interest in the ancestors, and distant blood ties are recognized just as they were in the past. In particular, everyone claims to be related to all the persons living in the same district as himself, so that the general obligations involved in the bond of kinship extend throughout this area. Such persons are therefore prepared to give one another assistance in all big undertakings and to come to the rescue immediately in times of trouble. In the heathen community whole groups of kin work together in the preparation of important festivities, and where bride-price is paid young men can always depend upon receiving contributions from the leading men in the district.

The present administrative system has, however, had a considerable effect on distant kinship ties, and even amongst the heathens their importance is diminishing. Now that disputes are settled by the Government relatives are no longer called upon to avenge one another's injuries, nor to put up a defence against other groups. Amongst the Christians matters have gone still further, since very few activities now demand the co-operation of more than a dozen individuals. Bride-price, in the Evangelical Mission, has been so much reduced that it can readily be provided if need be by the bridegroom himself, and there are no ceremonies in which the residents of a district combine as a unit. Probably the only opportunity distant relatives have nowadays for working together as a group is provided by an order to repair the government road : then each district makes itself responsible for a particular strip.

At the same time, the old sentimental attachment to kin is everywhere maintained, and if the assistance were required I have little doubt that it would still be given. Thus, although in recent years travel has enormously increased, wayfarers can always count on receiving hospitality from their relatives.

The districts are also beginning to lose some of their

significance as discrete social units. In the interior each one still has its *ngwane-inoto*, and the residents continue to collaborate under his leadership for the performance of certain ceremonies. But district is never pitted against district nowadays, and the barriers between them are being overlooked. This is especially true of the Christians, who not only refrain from fighting but also lack *ngwane-inoto*. The only Christian territorial division strongly differentiated from the rest is Alilo, since the residents all belong to the Melanesian Mission.

The chief importance of the districts to-day lies in the fact that through them rights to land are regulated. People still claim the privilege of cultivating gardens and erecting houses in every place where an ancestor is buried, and a European who wishes to lease an area for his own use has to make an arrangement agreeable to all those whose forbears lie in the vicinity. Most men also profess an emotional attachment to the district in which they are living and are loyal to those who live within its boundaries : criminals receive a great deal more sympathy from their neighbours, for example, than from other people. The situation is not very different from what one finds in remote rural districts in our own community, more especially those in which local rivalries are given expressions at cricket and football matches.

### ECONOMICS

The economic system has been disturbed by the introduction of various objects of Western manufacture, more particularly steel tools and clothing, which are now regarded as necessities. These can only be obtained in exchange for money, and every adult male requires in addition five shillings every year to pay the head tax which the Administration has imposed. The coastal natives have various products to sell, but those who live in the interior, having only their labour, are forced to enter the service of Europeans to provide themselves with cash. Married men, nevertheless, have too many responsibilities to leave home for long and, moreover, are too old to make satisfactory labourers, so that the money required has to be earned by the young people. The result is that one rarely sees any males between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two : all are away at work.

This money has given the young folk a good deal of independence, since in olden days the elders owned all the wealth. In the areas where the traditional valuables are still prized, however, the bulk of what is earned is handed over to members of the senior generation in the expectation of receiving a return in kind.

Yet the amount of money available is strictly limited, and European standards of home life have not been in any way adopted. Dwellings are still built almost exactly as they were years ago, the furnishings remain the same, and probably the only additions are a few blankets and cooking utensils. The same crops are also cultivated with only a digging-stick for tool, and taro and yams remain the staple foods. Pigs are still reared for meat, and the markets where fish may be obtained in exchange for vegetables continue to be held every few days. The Langalanga people also make regular visits and hand over their *tafuli'ae* for pigs. The Evangelical Christians, however, do not engage in exchanges as frequently as they did in the past, since they do not require nearly so many strings of shell discs.

It is a striking fact that money is in no way regarded as a substitute for the old type of valuable and that all ceremonial transactions are carried out to-day as in the past with *tafuli'ae*. Thus money is never handed over instead of bride-price, even though strings of discs may have to be bought for the purpose.

Generosity is also rated just as highly as in the past, and amongst the heathens social advancement is still secured by giving lavish feasts. The main reason why this is so is that, since Europeans do not require pigs and other native foodstuffs, there is no temptation to dispose of them for a more tangible gain. With their money, on the other hand, the people are not nearly so prodigal : not only do they have difficulty in acquiring it, but they can always store it away for future use without fear of deterioration should it not be needed at once.

#### AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP

In former times the economic dependence of the young on their elders was an excellent motive for obedience, and unruly young men could always be disciplined with the threat that

they would be left to fend for themselves. Bride-price was the elders' best weapon, for without their help marriage was impossible. In addition, the old men gave protection in dealings with other groups, offered up sacrifices, and carried out magic in the interests of their subordinates as well as themselves, so that a youth who incurred their wrath could readily be punished. Finally, in the unchanging conditions of the past, they were looked up to for their knowledge of tradition, which was considered to be of practical assistance in solving most problems.

To-day the young men of the heathen community still defer to their elders and pay them lip service, but with growing discontent. They are dependant for their bride-price, for mention in prayers when offerings are made to the ancestors, and for magic ; but they no longer require protection from rival groups. The position with regard to wealth, again, is no longer one-sided, for if the old men have their *tafuli'ae*, young people now have money. Knowledge of traditions is also not of much value nowadays : old-fashioned tales are of little help in dealings with white men, and in the changing world of the present the young people, with their plantation experience, are far more at home than their elders.

In the mission area the young men have passed beyond discontent to open defiance. The children of Evangelical converts learn to challenge the authority of their elders when they attend school—though not, it is true, within the school walls—and as they do not require assistance on marriage have no need at a later date to submit. The situation is not so serious in the Melanesian Mission, but even there the respect is nominal. The old men may have their *tafuli'ae*, but they are without money, can give no protection, do not offer sacrifices, and their magic is considered to be sinful.

Some old people are resigned to their new insignificant rôle, but the majority have grown querulous and criticize almost everything that takes place. The position is summed up by the change of meaning which has taken place with regard to the proverb, "The sun always rises in the same place." Aningali explained that once this meant that a man cannot change his temperament (that is to say it was roughly the equivalent of our own Biblical, "Can a leopard change its

spots ?") : it was quoted, for example, if a man known to be cruel thrashed one of his children. To-day, however, the implication is, "It does not matter what we young people do, the old folk will still go on grumbling." In olden days, said Aningali, the elders had no need to complain.<sup>1</sup>

But although in the past all the old men had a certain amount of authority, the real leaders were the *ngwane-inoto*, who achieved distinction by distributing wealth and furnishing the bulk of the food required for sacrificial feasts. The Mission disapproved of these feasts and their associated rites, and the result, so far as the Christian community is concerned, has been the complete collapse of the whole *ngwane-inoto* system. Amongst the heathens, on the other hand, sacrificial feasts still take place, and many districts, therefore, have a leader of the traditional type. Those who were established before the island was brought under European control wield a good deal of power, but those who have acquired the title in more recent times are at a comparative disadvantage, in that disputes are no longer brought to them for settlement. Their chief duty consists in holding sacrificial feasts and distributing valuables, and they owe their dominance to the fact that their subordinates hesitate to offer offence lest assistance should be withheld from their own smaller feasts. Everyone still likes to be in a position to give away as much as possible, even if he has to depend upon contributions from others.

The old system of control has thus collapsed altogether in some areas, and even where it remains has been considerably undermined. Disorderliness, as might have been expected, is very much on the increase—petty thieving, still almost unknown amongst the heathen, is now common elsewhere and would be a serious problem if locks were not obtainable from traders, many of the young people are no longer chaste, and adultery is almost certainly more prevalent. There are many communities where chastity is not a matter of importance, but in Malaita extra-marital intercourse represents a marked departure from traditional standards.

At the same time, it would be an exaggeration to describe the present situation as anarchy. Most actions which are

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the statement of R. H. Codrington that the old men of Florida sat down and wept at the loss of their power and privilege (*The Melanesians, their Anthropology, and Folklore*, Oxford, 1891, p. 99).

regarded as offences by native opinion are held by the Administration to be wrong, and criminals when caught are punished—though not always, it has to be admitted, with the severity that the natives would wish. The difficulty is not that more crimes are committed—though this in itself is sufficiently serious—but that the people have lost the right of governing themselves. The present treatment of the old men in mission areas is also a cause for regret. In any community which is subjected to sudden sweeping changes it is no doubt inevitable that the young people should feel superior to their more conservative seniors, but a society with a large number of its members acutely unhappy can scarcely be called healthy.

#### RELIGION

The heathen religion, springing as it does from man's impotence in the face of the unknown, has as its principal function the validation of hopes for the future : the natives are convinced that, when they have obtained the favour of supernatural forces by the due performance of ritual, they will be able to overcome all their difficulties and so achieve their desires. Magic fills much the same rôle, and in addition provides a valuable substitute reaction for longings whose fulfilment is impossible.

The religious system, again, by offering rewards for adherence to certain moral rules and assigning penalties for their neglect, establishes a standard of conduct and ratifies accepted ideas of right and wrong. These rules, nevertheless, relate only to behaviour within the kinship group : thus, although people imagine that a man who murders a relative may die, they think his ancestors will give him more than his full meed of success if he kills an outsider, so that, as few persons have more than 200 kinsmen, a good deal of violence is unchecked. In the past, as has been mentioned, the districts were sometimes split asunder by warfare in which, since the combatants were concerned more with honour than justice, the innocent parties often suffered.

Heathen festivals are also a tremendous spur to industry. People work hard in order to grow crops and rear pigs so as to secure the goodwill of the spirits and the admiration of their neighbours. The dancing, in addition, gives great

pleasure to everybody, and after the holiday they are all able to set to work with renewed vigour.

Can it be said that Christianity meets the same needs for its adherents? Certainly their hopes for the future are amply confirmed, and not only with reference to this world but also the world to come. The Christian ceremonies, in particular participation in Communion, also inspires the same confidence as the heathen ceremonies, and prayer has in many cases exactly taken the place of magic. Finally, Christianity provides a standard of conduct, backs up the ethical code, and in its native form offers rewards for obedience to certain moral rules and metes out punishment for neglect. These rules, moreover, are of much wider application than those of the heathen religion, in particular where respect for human life is concerned.

The chief disadvantage of Christianity as it is found in Malaita is that it gives no real substitute for the old festivals, and, more particularly, that it has no bearing on native economic activities. There can be no doubt that the absence of any obligation to produce a surplus results in reduced cultivation by the mission converts. Perhaps their digestion is better now that there are no feasts, since they have little temptation to over-eat; but they do not work with such a will nor take the same pride in their gardens. I am also inclined to believe that the enjoyment of church services may be merely temporary, since they occur so often and involve no special preparation.

I would emphasize again that Malaita Christianity owes as much to the natives themselves as to missionaries. It is this fact which makes it so effective: the people seized upon the elements which satisfied their needs and either distorted or rejected the rest. I am convinced, for example, that no missionary ever taught explicitly that sickness and death are the direct result of sin, or that enemies can be punished by praying to God. The natives, being still unaware of the true causes of disease, continue to imagine that it is produced by supernatural forces, but regard God rather than the *akalo* as responsible. I believe that even if the missions tried to introduce more philosophic doctrines these old ideas would still persist, and that it would be impossible without education to convince either Christians or heathens that disease is a natural phenomenon.

A comparison with the situation at Longgu, in Guadalcanal, is in this connection illuminating. These natives thought in former times that deaths were due to sorcery, but unlike their near neighbours in Malaita had no companion theory that the spirits were also involved. To-day, after twenty-five years of missionary effort, the belief in sorcery is still as firmly entrenched as ever, and no one has ever suggested that God punishes sin with death. Confession, again, which had no place in the old religion, has not been adopted.

The Malaita of to-day is thus in many ways different from the Malaita of yesterday; moreover, there is every indication that the process of change will continue, and that the Malaita of to-morrow will be still more different. It should now be possible, however, to regulate the changes and lay down plans, and I therefore propose to devote the concluding section of the book to a discussion of how future developments may best be directed.

PART III  
THE FUTURE

"Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencics of the present day will be supplied by the morrow, attend to the history of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia."

*Rasselas*, Chapter 1 (SAMUEL JOHNSON).

## CHAPTER XI

### BUILDING FOR TO-MORROW

It will be generally agreed that the present situation in Malaita is in many ways unsatisfactory, and that there is ample scope for reforms. Thus, to take the case of Administration, the conviction is growing everywhere, partly no doubt as a result of the work of the Permanent Mandates Commission, established when the German territories were distributed after the war, that the principle of trusteeship should be the ideal of all colonial powers. The responsibility for subject peoples, it is now felt, involves far more than facilitating their introduction to European enterprise: a definite obligation exists to encourage the social development of the natives so that they can eventually, after perhaps several generations, participate in the life of the world on the same sort of footing as ourselves. The Secretary of State for the Dominions, for example, stated recently, "Even among the most backward races . . . our main effort should always be to try to help peoples to stand a little more securely on their own feet."<sup>1</sup>

Practical considerations are also involved, for history has proved over and over again that no community is satisfied with subjection for long, even when it is being managed with the best will in the world for what the rulers honestly believe to be its own good. The maxim that "good government is no substitute for self government" has been employed hitherto only with reference to European peoples, but it applies with equal force to natives.

The authorities in several African dependencies, notably Nigeria and Tanganyika, have taken the lead by adopting a policy which allows the natives as far as possible to retain their old system of government. This policy, known as Indirect Rule, is described by Sir Donald Cameron, one of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, quoted in the London *Observer*, 3rd July, 1938. *Vide* also F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, London, 1935; and L. P. Mair, *Native Policies in Africa*, London, 1936, chapters i and vii.

its most distinguished exponents, as a form of administration "designed to adapt for local government the tribal institutions which the people have evolved for themselves, so that the latter may develop in a constitutional manner from their own past, guided and restrained by the traditions and sanctions which they have inherited, moulded or modified as they may be on the advice of British Officers".<sup>1</sup>

It is a significant fact that the investigation which followed the riots of 1929 in the South-Eastern Provinces, the one portion of Nigeria where, owing to various practical difficulties, Indirect Rule had not been introduced, showed conclusively that the main cause of the rising was dissatisfaction with the alien system of control.<sup>2</sup> Administrative reform if carried out in the Solomons now might effectively remove the possibility of similar trouble there in the future.

The position in Malaita with regard to indentured labourers is still more serious, since there have been so many repercussions already throughout the whole social order. The community loses most of its young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-six, and, for a variety of reasons, cannot now discipline them adequately on their return.

In this respect, again, the Solomons are by no means unique, and a committee of experts called together recently by the International Labour Conference to consider the whole question affirmed the following principle.

"Before permitting the recruiting of labour in any given area the competent authorities should take into consideration the possible effects of the withdrawal of adult males from the community concerned, and in particular should consider :

(a) the density of the population and its tendency to increase or decrease, and the probable effects upon the birth rate of the withdrawal of adult males;

(b) the possible effect of the withdrawal of adult males upon the welfare and development of the community, notably in connection with the food supply;

(c) the moral dangers arising from such withdrawal;

<sup>1</sup> D. Cameron, *The Principles of Native Administration and their Application*. Pamphlet issued in Nigeria with the approval of the Secretary of State for Colonies, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> This investigation was carried out under the direction of G. K. Meek, government anthropologist, who has given an account of the work involved in his *Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe*, Oxford, 1937. *Vide also* M. Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria*, Oxford, 1937, pp. 261-254.

(d) the probable effects upon social organization."<sup>1</sup>

In parts of Africa the natives are being encouraged to grow marketable crops in order that they may acquire money without having to work for wages. On the other hand, in those Pacific islands where the need for labourers has been especially urgent, as for example in the chrome and nickel mines of New Caledonia and on the phosphate deposits of Nauru, coolies have been imported from south-eastern Asia and the Dutch East Indies, with the result that the local natives are not pressed to leave their homes. Lever's have several times urged the Colonial Office to sanction the introduction of coolies into the Solomons, but so far without success.

Again, despite the fact that Christianity has in many ways been so satisfactorily adapted to Malaita standards, there are many points at which a more tolerant attitude on the part of missionaries would make possible the retention of institutions which have a considerable value to native life and do not necessarily conflict with Christian teaching. In this connection it is instructive once more to look towards Africa. The Reverend Edwin Smith has pointed out in *The Golden Stool* that the assumption of the unquestionable superiority of European to native institutions has led to the ill-judged destruction of much that was vital to African life, and his plea for a mission policy which will regard native institutions with sympathy and as far as possible seek to build upon them, rather than attempt to write Christianity on a clean slate, has influenced the future planning of many missions. Dr. Diedrich Westermann stresses the same point of view in *The African To-day*, where he writes that missionaries should endeavour to prove "that Christianity comes to a strange civilization not to work its destruction, but to fulfil it, that is to say, to bring to their full flowering the seeds of humanity which lie unseen in primitive civilization". Missions, he adds, should not feel themselves called upon "to bring the civilization of a European nation to the African, but to bring the Gospel".<sup>2</sup> The arguments advanced by these two

<sup>1</sup> *The Recruiting of Labour in Colonies and Other Territories with Analogous Labour Conditions*, Report IV of the nineteenth session of the International Labour Conference, Geneva, 1935, pp. 126-7.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Smith, *The Golden Stool*, London, 1927.

<sup>3</sup> D. Westermann, *The African To-day*, Oxford, 1934, p. 220. *Vide also Re-Thinking Missions*, New York, 1932.

leaders of missionary thought in England and Germany are surely applicable in the same degree to the Pacific.

Finally, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive system of education. The Malu'u schools may have taught the scholars how to read the Bible, but the part they have so far played in helping the people to adjust themselves to European contact is not worth consideration, and their effect on native social life has been mainly harmful. The Solomons are behind most other colonial territories in this respect, and during the last few years a considerable literature has been published dealing with actual experiments carried out in various parts of the world. The general consensus of opinion is that natives can best be equipped to face modern conditions by schooling, and the only matter for debate is the precise form it is to take. A Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for Colonies stated : "The problem is not whether the African should be educated, but what type of education is best adapted to his past, his present, and his future."<sup>1</sup>

The best informed opinion, so far as British colonies are concerned, is that native education should "encourage all that is sound and healthy in the indigenous life of the people", but, at the same time, introduce "such modifications as will fit the individual for the social and economic changes which are bound to follow increasing contact with Europeans".<sup>2</sup>

"Perhaps the greatest danger in the education of primitive peoples is that we should try to force our own concepts upon them ready made, using for the purpose educational institutions adapted to our own conditions," writes Professor Julian Huxley. "The first essential is to relate the type of education to the local conditions, including not only the geography and economics of the people, but also their social organization and traditional ideas. The second is to relate it to the ideal you have for their future development. And the third is to relate it to the general culture of the world. . . . But the prime necessity is to educate them for their own concrete

<sup>1</sup> *Higher Education in East Africa : Report of the Commission*, September, 1937, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1937, Colonial No. 142. A brief summary of views on native education in Africa is given in L. P. Mair, op. cit., pp. 15-18.

<sup>2</sup> *Educational Policy in Tropical Africa*, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1925, Cmd. No. 2747; and W. B. Mumford, "Malangali School," *Africa*, vol. iii, pp. 265-292. Cf. also the educational systems of the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines. I am restricting myself deliberately, however, to British territories.

development as a community, in their own particular environment. Education should help them to make their activities more profitable, to take a greater pride in their activities, to enjoy themselves more, to blend what is good in their tradition with what is good in the tradition of Western civilization."<sup>1</sup>

I shall now proceed to investigate the possibilities in Malaita for administrative reform, alternatives to wage labour, a broader mission policy and a scheme for native education, basing my conclusions as far as possible on what has already been put into practice, mainly in Africa.

#### ADMINISTRATION

The system to which the name Indirect Rule has been given was originally considered suitable only for tribes which already possessed a highly centralized political authority, such as the Emirates of Northern Nigeria, to which the kingdom of Tonga might be cited as the nearest Pacific counterpart. Of late years, however, the view has been taken, particularly in Nigeria and Tanganyika, that even where it is not possible to find a large native political unit, it is better to base local government on indigenous institutions than on *ad hoc* offices artificially created; and in certain parts of these territories the recognized native authority is a council of elders with jurisdiction extending no further than its own village. An examination of the methods adopted in the South-Eastern Provinces after the riots of 1929 is most instructive, especially since the tribes concerned are as loosely organized, though in a different way, as the people of Malaita. Some of them, for example, are without any form of central government or hereditary leadership: they are made up in many cases of independent villages, groups of which are united by kinship ties to form local clans.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Donald Cameron, who at that time was Governor, has stated that when seeking out what the native authorities are

<sup>1</sup> J. Huxley, "The Education of Primitive Peoples," *Progressive Education*, vol. ix.

<sup>2</sup> For a condensed account of the history of Indirect Rule in Nigeria and Tanganyika, *vide* L. P. Mair, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-157. My principal authority in the following paragraphs, however, is M. Perham, *op. cit.*, chapter xvi.

the proper procedure is to begin at the bottom. "Build from the bottom," he said, "do not attempt to make, as it were, a crown or a king at the top and then try to find something underneath on which it might—perhaps—appropriately be placed.<sup>1</sup> Begin with the people in the lower courses of the structure, the family first, the extended family, and so on through the various grades right up to the authority, whatever it may be."<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, officers were sent out to make a detailed study of the people and find out first what they themselves desired. It was laid down as a fundamental principle in fact, that no scheme should be tried until the consent of the natives had been obtained, and the official instructions stated that although "the people can be advised in the matter by the Administrative Officer the final decision must rest with themselves". Above all, officers were warned to resist the temptation to preserve ancient institutions merely on account of their age.<sup>3</sup>

It was by no means easy to find out what the people did want—they hardly knew themselves—and many of the schemes were frankly tentative, since it was hoped that a few years of trial and error would eventually shape native institutions to meet the new needs. There is still a good deal of variation throughout the territory, but the system most widely adopted was the establishment first of village courts to deal with local matters, and then of clan courts to consider appeals. The members are chosen by the groups they represent, but the number is generally fixed by the Government. If a headman is recognized he sits as president; if not one is chosen for the occasion.

The procedure is of the simplest, and court fees are reduced to the minimum (from 2s. to 5s.), about forty per cent being retained by the judges, who may also receive an allowance from the local Treasury. The cases heard include

<sup>1</sup> This, incidentally, is what had been done before the riots occurred and was the main cause of dissatisfaction.

<sup>2</sup> D. Cameron, "Native Administration in Nigeria and Tanganyika," Supplement to the *Journal of the Royal African Society*, vol. xxxvi, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Miss Perham makes the following comment (p. 241). "These instructions might serve as a model in other parts of British Africa which stand in need of similar reorganization. They were not written for publication and I am convinced from my study of Intelligence Reports, and from watching some of the investigations being carried out, that a very honest attempt has been made to obey them."

civil actions in which the debt, demand, or damages do not exceed £10, with jurisdiction up to £35 in matrimonial cases, and Criminal Causes which can be adequately punished by imprisonment for one month, six lashes, or a fine of £2 10s. The courts also have control in a large measure over about half the money contributed by the people in the form of taxes to the Government. Miss Perham reports, for example, that the "smallest Native Administration in Warri Province, with an annual revenue of £100, so greatly desires a school that it has cut its expenditure to the bone and has already saved £130 towards the fulfilment of its dream".

If all this has been achieved in Nigeria some comparable scheme should surely be possible in Malaita. A patient inquiry is obviously necessary first, and any scheme would have to be looked upon as tentative for a few years at least. Further, nothing of which the people themselves disapprove should be attempted. I have a plan to suggest myself, but as I did not work it out until after the completion of the first two sections of this book, long after I had left the field, I am not in a position to say whether the natives would accept it. Should it ever be taken up seriously they would have to be given every opportunity to discuss it before any endeavour was made to impose it upon them, and if it proved to be unpopular it ought to be scrapped at once.

The most important social unit is the district group, and amongst the heathens each one of these still has its *ngwane-inoto*. I would suggest that these men be recognized by the Government and legally empowered to exercise the same sort of control over their followers as in the past, even to the extent of imposing small fines.

In the mission areas, it is true, the *ngwane-inoto* have disappeared, but although some natives, the teachers especially, rejoice at their passing, there is ample reason for supposing that many are regretful. The tradition of *ngwane-inoto*, in any case, is a living reality, and everyone knows what their position in the old culture was. I believe that it ought to be possible, through co-operation with the missions, for the Government to reintroduce feasts and dances resembling those of other days. If I am right I see no reason why the Christian natives might not also have *ngwane-inoto* once more with the same legal rights as their heathen counterparts. Should the missions be unwilling

to co-operate, however, the people might be induced to choose one of their number as leader to receive equivalent powers.

The office of *ngwane-inoto* is not necessarily held for life, so that supervision by the district officer would be necessary to ensure resignation if a man with superior qualifications arose. A close watch would have to be kept, for once a native authority is recognized and has become dependant upon official backing he no longer has the need to conciliate public opinion. Persons sentenced to punishment would also have to be permitted an appeal to some higher authority.

Unlike the people of Nigeria, the Solomon islanders have never at any time had courts of their own, and in olden days disputes in which two districts were involved were settled by armed force. Yet I am of the opinion that it might be possible to organize some such body as a council which could also function as a court to meet modern needs. I would suggest that all the *ngwane-inoto* of a territorial division, or comparable area, might meet together regularly to discuss matters of common policy and to hear appeals from verdicts of any of their number, as well as disputes in which more than one district is concerned. The Government headman would probably be acceptable as chairman, and his knowledge of European court procedure would be invaluable, though there is no reason why this should be exactly followed. A clerk would probably also be necessary to keep a brief record of the cases dealt with.<sup>1</sup>

Following the Nigerian model, the offences with which this court was competent to deal could be enumerated. I believe that it could safely be empowered to inflict fines up to about 10s. and sentences of up to three months' imprisonment. Supervision by the district officer would, of course, be essential, but this also occurs in Nigeria.<sup>2</sup> More serious crimes, such as murder, would still have to be dealt with

<sup>1</sup> Village councils of this type are now a feature of native life in the coastal regions of Papua and also, since about 1935, in the villages near Rabaul, the main commercial centre of the Territory of New Guinea. So far as I know, however, they have no legal powers, but of this I am not certain, since they have not yet been described in print.

<sup>2</sup> "There must be such a degree of watchfulness as will place the Government in a position to affirm whether the rights of the people to justice and fair treatment under a British Administration are being carefully assured and safeguarded." D. Cameron, *The Principles of Native Administration*, op. cit., p. 8.

by a higher authority, but here again Nigeria serves as a precedent. "There are cases which native courts ought not to take, and some which many of them are not competent to take," says Sir Donald Cameron. "To try the courts which, after all, are but instruments in the administration of the dependency as a whole, beyond their powers and their capacity must surely be unsound policy."<sup>1</sup>

In these higher courts conducted by the district officer or judicial commissioner, however, it might be possible for at least one native, perhaps the headman, to sit as an assessor.

The sense of local responsibility could well be developed by giving the *ngwane-inoto's* council control, subject to the usual supervision, over the expenditure within the division of a certain percentage of the revenue on public services, such as the maintenance of medical patrols and schools, and the members might even be entrusted with the collection of the head tax from their respective followers.

Finally, I suggest that the Administration might consider the possibility of making gaol a little more uncomfortable for offenders against the native code, though I certainly do not advocate greater severity in the punishment of those guilty of offences against Europeans.

The plan as I have conceived it is merely the roughest of sketches, but the basic principles of Indirect Rule preclude the possibility of working out a general policy of native government without reference to the people themselves. Details must be settled on the spot, and the finer points will have to be left to the district officer, since he alone is in a position to know the exact requirements of the Administration. North Malaita would be an excellent place for an experiment which, if successful, might then be applied, with suitable modifications, to the whole of the Protectorate.

Administrative reform ought not to come to a complete standstill after this first step, though it may halt there for a considerable period. If it is agreed that the natives are ultimately to take part in the life of the world as a community in their own right, further changes will after a time become necessary. Consideration of what these are to be, however, is best left for the future, when the people are beginning to feel their need.

<sup>1</sup> "Native Administration in Nigeria and Tanganyika," op. cit., p. 14.

## THE FUTURE

## INDENTURED LABOUR

Reorganization of the system of government would affect only administrative officials and the native population, and it is therefore most unlikely that Europeans engaged in commercial enterprises would have any further objection than the general complaint of "pampering". Interference with the supply of labour, on the other hand, would cause violent opposition, since, except during the depression when, even with expenses cut to the minimum, many planters became bankrupt, the demand for workers has for years exceeded the supply. Major F. R. Hewitt, manager of Lever's, informs me, for instance, that the company's plantations have been so understaffed that it has been impossible to bring all the land purchased or leased under cultivation.

The information in the second part of this book, nevertheless, has established beyond question that indentured labour is having a disastrous effect on the native life, a situation which has many parallels elsewhere, as is indicated by the International Labour Office Report already quoted,<sup>1</sup> as well as such works as Major Orde Browne's *African Labourer*.<sup>2</sup>

The Administration will therefore have to decide sooner or later whether the interests of the natives or of the planters are of paramount importance, and act accordingly.

In Africa the territories already committed to the policy of Indirect Rule have deliberately chosen in favour of the natives. Thus in Tanganyika, although large tracts of land were alienated by the German Administration before the war and are now under cultivation by planters, the Mandatory Administration has only made over a few small areas and has closed large parts of the Territory to alienation altogether.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This report also lays down the following principle:—

"When considering applications for land or mineral concessions or other applications to establish undertakings the granting of which is likely to involve the recruiting of labour, the competent authorities should only grant such applications on condition that:—

"(a) there will be no risk of pressure on the peoples concerned in order to obtain the labour required for such concessions or undertakings;

"(b) the political and social organization of such peoples and their powers of adjustment will not be endangered by the demand for labour, whether the labour be offered spontaneously or not." (*The Recruiting of Labour in Colonies*, op. cit., p. 126.)

<sup>2</sup> G. St. J. Orde Browne, *The African Labourer*, Oxford, 1933.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* L. P. Mair, op. cit., pp. 138–157. Conditions in this respect are closer to those of the Solomons in Tanganyika than in Nigeria, where the avowed intention of the Administration to make peasant farmers of the

It was the policy during the period when Sir Donald Cameron was Governor (1924-31, before his transfer to Nigeria) to introduce salable crops suitable for native cultivation to ensure that no one would be forced by lack of alternative means of meeting his cash obligations to enter European employment; and during the depression when the plantations had to cut down production there was a further campaign to stimulate native cultivation. At the present time peasant farmers are growing for outside markets coffee, cotton, rice, groundnuts, maize, onions, wheat, garlic, tobacco, and coconuts.

The official attitude is illustrated by a statement made by the Governor in 1926. "I have steadfastly refused to increase the tax in the districts in which the natives cannot augment their earnings by working for themselves," he said. "Coercion of labour by pressure of direct taxation is little, if anything, removed from coercion of labour by force; the latter is the more honest course." Government reports also mention without any sign of regret the preference of the average native for village cultivation, even when employment could be found close to his home, and it is noted that the one congested area is conspicuously not a reservoir for labour.

Such a policy, since their pockets are directly affected, is most unpopular with all the non-official Europeans, but the Administration has so far made its plans without any deference to their criticism—expressed repeatedly, for example, in the Legislative Council—considering only that "the development of the native people is the sacred trust of civilization". It remains to be seen whether commercial interests will ultimately be able to exert sufficient pressure to enforce a modification of this attitude.

Tanganyika is by no means typical of all African territories, however, even when the Union is excluded from consideration. The Solomons are unlikely to follow South Africa, where a policy based on the maintenance of white superiority as its fundamental principle has militated against the introduction of measures which have in most other places been considered necessary in the interests of native welfare.<sup>1</sup>

natives is unlikely to be met with serious hostility, owing to the comparatively small number of Europeans settled there.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide M. Hunter, Reaction to Conquest*, Oxford, 1936; *Western Civilisation and the Natives of South Africa* (ed. I. Schapera), London, 1934; and L. P. Mair, op. cit., pp. 20-63.

But in many parts of tropical Africa, such as Kenya and the Rhodesias, white settlement is still being actively encouraged. The general result, since the planters can so much more easily make their wishes felt, is a tendency for the governments concerned to neglect native at the expense of European development. Thus in Kenya, where the European population is twice that of Tanganyika and the native population half, though the Administration is officially committed to a dual policy ("increasing native production in the reserves *pari passu* with the development of European enterprise"), in fact European interests have been held to be of greater importance at every point of conflict, and the natives have been "encouraged" to seek employment by all the time-honoured methods of pressure, such as high taxation and prohibitions on the cultivation of many salable crops.<sup>1</sup>

The question is, will the Administration of the Solomons follow the line of least resistance and pay heed to the requirements of the local planters, or is it going to give consideration to the consequences of wage labour on native society and take steps, as Tanganyika has done, to obviate them? No statement of policy has ever been made, and a study of what has been done in the past is not particularly illuminating. On the one hand, there is the imposition of taxes on natives who cannot find the money unless they go out to work, and, on the other, a considerable body of Regulations expressly designed to prevent serious exploitation. It is worth noting, however, that, despite active opposition from Europeans, many of whose livelihood was at stake, trading licences were recently granted to Chinese, who, on account of their different standard of living, charge their customers lower prices. Whatever is done, the Administration should certainly take recent developments in Africa into consideration, especially the growing nationalism, oriented against Europeans, in such territories as Kenya.

Should it be decided that farming is to be encouraged the initial difficulty no doubt will be to find suitable crops. Discussion of this aspect of the matter, however, is best postponed until we deal with the subject of education, though it may be mentioned that what Europeans can make pay is not strictly relevant, since their costs are so much higher. Another point sometimes raised is that against the increase

<sup>1</sup> L. P. Mair, op. cit., pp. 77-100.

of wealth must be weighed the disadvantages of involving the native community in the fluctuations of world markets. Yet it must be remembered that the recent depression had considerable repercussion on the life of the islanders. The demand for plantation labourers sank to a minimum, traders refused to buy native grown coconuts, and, most important, the minimum wage was reduced from £1 to 10s. per month, the level at which it still remains.

There would appear to be one way, and one way only, for the Administration to satisfy the needs of both natives and Europeans ; that is by permitting the importation of coolie labour. I cannot support my views with native statements, but I believe that many youths, eager to see the world, would still be willing to work for a short period. An adequate supply of Asiatic labour, however, would obviate the necessity for putting pressure on the men over twenty-one, most of whom, I imagine, would prefer to remain at home. But, while such a scheme may have its advantages for the Solomon Islanders, the welfare of the coolies must also be considered.

The most extensive applications of the coolie system were those of the Transvaal (terminated 1906) and British Malaysia (terminated 1914-16), both of which, from the point of view of the coolies themselves, were an unqualified failure.<sup>1</sup> Conditions in the Transvaal were described by a Secretary of State as "unhealthy, unnatural, and unwholesome", and the whole experiment dismissed as "a moral disaster". Investigation disclosed the following facts : first, the coolies were housed in insanitary conditions and given improper food to eat, with the result that many of them died : second, since the Governments concerned did not employ sufficient inspectors the coolies were often shockingly ill-treated ; third, penal sanctions could be invoked against those who refused duty even for legitimate reasons ; fourth, the lack of traditional restraints led to many crimes of violence both amongst themselves and against Europeans ; fifth, without the normal means of filling their leisure time they gambled and smoked opium ; and sixth, since there were practically no women, homosexuality, including male prostitution, flourished.

No one will doubt that such a state of affairs reflects

<sup>1</sup> P. C. Campbell, *Chinese Coolie Emigration to Countries within the British Empire*, London, 1923.

seriously on all concerned. But more than thirty years have elapsed since the last coolie was shipped home from the Transvaal, and there is no reason why coolies should be treated in this fashion to-day.

Thus adequate Government supervision could easily ensure that housing and diet were suitable and the coolies not ill-treated. Moreover, if the prevalence of homosexuality is used as an argument against indentured coolies it should be applied with equal force against indentured Solomon Islanders. At the same time, it is doubtful whether even the most rigorous supervision could replace traditional restraints in counteracting the tendency to crime, and gambling and opium smoking could probably never be entirely eradicated.

In the western Pacific the coolie system has been tried and abandoned in Fiji and Western Samoa, but still persists in New Caledonia.<sup>1</sup>

Eastern India provided the main source of Fijian coolie labour. Recruiting was conducted by agents of the Administration, and officials also made regular inspections of the sugar plantations where the coolies worked. At the termination of a five-year contract the employers were liable if called upon to provide a return passage, but coolies who wished to remain were allowed to do so. Conditions in Fiji proved to be attractive, and most of them preferred to become tenant farmers. The firm principally concerned, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, was willing to lease them land and then buy the sugar crop.

In 1914 a Commission appointed by the Viceroy of India reported favourably on the system, mentioning in particular that "the great majority of the emigrants exchange grinding poverty with practically no hope of betterment for a condition varying from simple but secure comfort to solid prosperity". Two years later, however, the Reverend C. F. Andrews,

<sup>1</sup> Chinese coolies are also employed to work the phosphate deposits of Nauru, but Miss C. H. Wedgwood, who carried out field work amongst the native Nauruans, tells me that conditions on this island are unique, and that arguments based on the success of the system there can have no general validity. Nauru is very small, and as all the coolies are employed by the one firm, the British Phosphate Commission, the most rigid control can be exercised without difficulty. The local natives also despise the Chinese, and miscegenation, a source of criticism elsewhere, does not take place. French settlers in the New Hebrides are also permitted by the Condominium Government to import coolies, a privilege denied to British residents. I have searched in vain for published information relating to the working of the system.

who visited Fiji on behalf of a committee of Indian gentlemen, issued a most damning report, in which he pointed out that the emigrants were misled by recruiting agents, that the proportion of females (forty per cent) was too low for a healthy morality, and the ratio of criminals to the total population was higher in Fiji than in India. He also raised strong objection to the clauses in the contracts providing for the punishment of coolies who refused duty.<sup>1</sup>

After prolonged discussion the importation of coolies was prohibited, the last one being freed from his indenture on 31st December, 1919. Commercial interests have made no agitation for the withdrawal of the ban, since the coolies have proved excellent settlers, and it has been found more profitable to have them grow the sugar on land leased to them than to engage them as labourers. The Reverend C. F. Andrews recently revisited Fiji and expressed satisfaction with present conditions.<sup>2</sup>

The Fijian natives are now beginning to raise protests, nevertheless, arguing that the islands are in danger of becoming an Indian colony. At the present time the population figures are 85,002 Indians and 97,651 Fijians.<sup>3</sup> Should the Indians increase more rapidly than the Fijians the Administration will certainly have to face many serious problems.

Western Samoa is held under mandate of the League of Nations by New Zealand. The Dominion Labour Party has always been opposed to the coolie system, and when returned to office in a recent election determined to end it. All the coolies in the Territory were shipped back to China in 1938, in spite of their own protests, those of their Samoan wives and part-Samoan children, and also those of their employers.

According to Dr. Keesing, who made a study of Samoa in 1930-31, whatever charges may be brought against the system during the German regime, at the time of his visit it appeared to be functioning to the general satisfaction of

<sup>1</sup> W. A. Chapple, *Fiji : its Problems and Resources*, Wellington, New Zealand, 1921, chapters ix, x, xi. *Vide* also C. Bavin, "The Indian in Fiji," *A Century in the Pacific* (ed. J. Colwell), Sydney, 1914, pp. 175-197.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Report on the Social and Economic Progress of the People of Fiji*, 1936, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1938, Colonial Reports—Annual, No. 1833, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

everybody in Samoa itself, the coolies included. There was a Chinese Commissioner to protect the interests of his countrymen, and as these were more or less free labourers and not indentured to any particular employer conditions had to be made attractive. Moreover, even at the worst, the work was infinitely easier than the life-and-death struggle for a pittance in the villages of south China. The sex problem was also solved in part by the willingness of the Samoan women to marry the coolies.<sup>1</sup>

The only information available with regard to New Caledonia, which is under French control, is contained in International Labour Office Reports, which limit themselves almost exclusively to the legal aspects of the matter. There is thus no means of finding out whether the coolies are satisfied with their conditions, though it is probably significant that the number offering themselves is not diminishing.

At the census of 1931 the population of the island included 28,502 natives and 11,448 coloured immigrants, mainly Indo-Chinese and Javanese who were employed in industrial and mining undertakings. In the districts where the local population has remained relatively dense the colonists are able to obtain a certain amount of native labour, but this supply is diminishing as the people learn to cultivate coffee and coconuts for themselves, so that the demand for coolies will probably increase.<sup>2</sup>

At the present time immigrant labourers are indentured for a period of five years, with a possibility of re-engagement

<sup>1</sup> F. M. Keesing, *Modern Samoa*, London, 1934, pp. 252-274. If the action of the government was consciously inspired by a desire to reserve Samoa for the Samoans it merits our respect. Dr. Keesing points out, however, that the main objection to the scheme seems to have been racial hysteria (possibly inspired by a fear of the spread of cheap labour to New Zealand?). Headlines appeared in New Zealand newspapers regarding "Samoa's Yellow Peril", and the Chinese were described in offensive terms as contaminating the Samoans and debasing their womanhood. Yet the native women found the Chinese acceptable, and the Chinese-Samoan mixed-bloods are "of good physique, keen, and usually high in the school honours' lists, and as adults they have a reputation for industry". According to statements made at the time "principles of humanity" were another reason why the coolies were returned. One wonders what principles determined a decision to send them to a homeland which many of them had not seen for years at a time when she was engaged in a bloody war. Whatever the motives, the effect of their withdrawal will probably be that the planters will not be able to secure sufficient labour for their estates, since the local natives can satisfy their monetary needs adequately from the sale of their own crops, and thus have no need to seek employment.

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. Recruiting of Labour in Colonies*, op. cit., p. 79.

for a period of not less than six months and not more than two years. The employer must then, if called upon to do so, arrange for repatriation within six months and defray the cost. The Administration, however, reserves the right to demand immediate repatriation before the expiration of the contract "in the interests of public order". Administrative supervision takes the form also of a medical inspection on the arrival of the ship, the assignment of the workers to their employers, their registration, and the signing of the contract in the presence of an official. In addition, the Governor, by a special veto, may order that no contract of engagement be concluded with an employer who in the previous two years has been convicted of ill-treating his workers.<sup>1</sup>

If the evidence I have presented is insufficient to prove beyond doubt that emigration does coolies no harm, it also fails to establish that they are adversely affected. The fullest study of the social conditions amongst coolie groups refers to the Transvaal and Malaysia, where immigration ceased many years ago, and we are very much in need of a comparable account of the situation to-day, especially in New Caledonia. Further, we require information regarding social life, food supplies and working hours in the countries from which the coolies are drawn. It is possible that the struggle for existence at home is so great that, as the Fijian material suggests, imperfect conditions in the islands are preferable.<sup>2</sup>

I would suggest that a Commission to ascertain all these facts might be undertaken for the express purpose of deciding whether a coolie system is worthy of an experiment in the Solomons. I do not believe that it will be found a perfect solution for all difficulties, and I am certain that it will create problems of its own, but once the facts are known the Administration can decide whether the ultimate gain is worth what it will cost.

#### MISSIONS

The natives, not understanding Christianity in the form in which it was presented to them, have adapted it to suit

<sup>1</sup> *Regulation of Contracts of Employment of Indigenous Workers*, Report II of the twenty-fourth session of the International Labour Conference, Geneva, 1937, pp. 95, 126, 159.

<sup>2</sup> A somewhat analogous case is provided by German Jews who have migrated to Australia, where they consider themselves lucky when working under conditions which few persons of Australian birth would tolerate.

themselves, and at the present time it is an effective substitute for the old religion. In one respect it is an improvement, since it reflects modern conditions. In olden days each group of kindred was entirely independent, and a person was expected to be loyal only to his relatives and to avenge injuries committed against them by members of other groups. The heathens believe in consequence that the spirits punish a man who wrongs his relatives but reward him if he seeks vengeance on interfering outsiders. To-day the Administration has taken over the duty of punishing offenders, and as private revenge is no longer permitted the old religion countenances an illegal act. Christianity, however, urges loyalty and goodwill to all, irrespective of kinship ties—or perhaps one should rather say, it insists that all men are brothers even when they are not united by blood ties.

The natives emphasize the magical aspect of Communion, but missions might well bring home to them the brotherhood of man by stressing the fact that it is also a meal. Family life still has its centre in the evening supper, when father and mother gather their children around them, and it might be pointed out that Communion is a similar repast for the whole Christian family with God as its head. He is the spiritual Father, and as all Christians are His children they stand in the relationship of brothers and sisters, and ought to treat one another accordingly. The natives appreciate the symbolic side of ceremonial—they point out, for instance, that baptism cleanses a person from sin—and would readily grasp this view of Communion. The extension of the terms for brother and sister would also be familiar from the workings of their own kinship system.

Although Christianity has been modified in so many ways to suit native requirements, greater tolerance and sympathy on the part of missionaries would ensure the retention of much of the old culture which does not necessarily conflict with Gospel teachings. Bride-price is an example. The effects of the prohibition have been most unfortunate, and the recent partial restoration cannot undo the harm already done. It is not yet too late to reintroduce the custom in its old form, and I would urge that this be done as soon as possible. I have shown, moreover, that leadership depended on the giving of feasts associated with sacrifices and other

ceremonies. The feasts themselves are open to no objection on moral grounds ; above all, the widespread belief that the dancing has a sexual content is erroneous. If it were possible to find some means of reviving these feasts, divorced as they must now be from their earlier religious significance, it might well be possible, as has been mentioned, to restore the authority of the *ngwane-inoto*. This step could only be taken with the active support of the missions, but there would seem to be no harm in allowing the principal Christian festivals to be celebrated with feasts and dances of native type.

Missionaries, it is now generally agreed, require more than piety and energy, all that was demanded of them in the past. In the nineteenth century their work may have been dangerous, but by comparison with what has to be done now it was straightforward, uncomplicated, and easy. They should not only be persons of outstanding ability, but fully trained to form a just assessment of the culture of the people with whom they are working. I do not say that without the guidance of anthropology such knowledge is impossible, but it is a fact that those unacquainted with the science seldom have any idea of what is going on around them ; and, in any case, a person can become familiar with a native culture much more quickly when he knows the type of phenomena to expect.

The position to-day is fortunately much better than it was, and the Department of Anthropology in the University of Sydney during the last few years has trained over seventy candidates for the mission field in New Guinea, Papua, Fiji, and Australia. It is to be hoped that this training will soon be extended to missionaries posted in the Solomon Islands, since unless a more sympathetic attitude to native institutions is adopted there may be a revival of the old religions, as has already occurred in New Zealand, amongst "civilized" Australian aborigines, and many other native peoples.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* S. B. Babbage, *Hauhauism*, Dunedin, N.Z., 1937 ; A. P. Elkin, "Civilized Aborigines and Native Culture," *Oceania*, vol. vi, pp. 117-136 ; R. Firth, "Anthropology in Australia," *Oceania*, vol. iii, pp. 8-9 ; E. W. P. Chinnery and A. C. Haddon, "Five New Religious Cults in British New Guinea," *Hibbert Journal*, vol. xv, pp. 448-463. F. E. Williams, "The Vailala Madness," *Anthropological Report*, No. 4, Port Moresby, 1923 ; and F. E. Williams, *Orokaiva Magic*, Oxford, 1928.

## EDUCATION

In territories where an educational policy has been in operation for many years the schooling has until recently followed European lines. Thus in Fiji the curriculum was modelled directly on a syllabus drawn up for schools in New Zealand,<sup>1</sup> and in Uganda, to take an African example, education has been almost exclusively literary, aiming at the provision of a training which will enable intelligent natives to qualify for any profession. Even Nigerian schools until a short time ago based their courses on what is provided in England, and the pupils sat for English examinations.<sup>2</sup>

Dissatisfaction with this type of schooling, however, is now fairly general. "It is a common criticism of our educational policy in Africa that education . . . has come to mean unrelated information, the acquiring of literary skill and languages, but that it has singularly little influence on the life of the masses of the people," writes Mr. Dougall, one of the pioneers of the new movement. "It has not resulted, as we hoped, in the adoption of improved methods in the elementary matters of food and clothing, the care of babies, and the practice of agriculture by the communities around the school. Schools have been isolated centres of 'learning' rather than centres of training for the life of action. Their influence has been strangely confined to the individuals who have there learnt to read, write, and do sums in arithmetic. To them the tools of learning have been primarily decorative or profitable to themselves rather than practical and useful in their familiar social background."<sup>3</sup>

Criticism of the same type has also been made with reference to the Pacific, and experiments with a view to carrying out reforms are now in progress in Fiji and Nauru, to mention only two areas.

<sup>1</sup> C. W. Mann, *Education in Fiji*, Educational Research Series, No. 33, Melbourne University Press, 1935.

<sup>2</sup> Brief accounts of education in Uganda and Nigeria are given by L. P. Mair, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-7, 179-180.

<sup>3</sup> J. W. C. Dougall, "School Education and Native Life," *Africa*, vol. iii, pp. 49-58. *Vide* also B. Malinowski, "Native Education and Culture Contact," *International Review of Missions*, vol. xxv, pp. 480-515. Professor Malinowski, while expressing general approval of Mr. Dougall's views, considers this statement unduly optimistic, since not many acquire "literary skill and languages" properly, and fewer still "do sums in arithmetic", or even read and write in later life.

Systems which provide the highest forms of education for a few are even worse than those which are merely out of touch with the requirements of the majority, since natives with a university training often have little appreciation of the problems of their less enlightened fellows and are also, owing to colour prejudice, unacceptable to the majority of Europeans.<sup>1</sup> Such training carries with it all the ordinary sociological assumptions of the white man, with the result that those who have passed through it clamour for the wholesale Westernization of their territories and are more ignorant than the intelligent European of the real needs and point of view of the uneducated native.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as, for example, on the Gold Coast and in Uganda, there is a tendency for these systems to produce a larger professional class than the community can possibly absorb, and if the people cannot secure the kind of employment for which their education is a training they are unfitted for anything else.<sup>3</sup>

The attempt is now being made therefore to envisage a type of education which will have some bearing on native life and train the scholars to be more valuable members of the community rather than superior to it. Thus the Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for Colonies to consider the reorganization of East African schools reported that, "Primary education must be in touch with life, and must be capable of being completed by life; Africa must avoid a primary education which is only capable of being completed by secondary education."<sup>4</sup> Another African authority, Dr. L. P. Mair, points out, further, that the new education "should be a potential means of developing native society *as a whole* rather than a method of removing certain individuals to an alien environment where they as individuals may earn prestige and monetary gain . . . it should have a direct bearing on the life that will in fact be the lot of the majority of the pupils who pass through it."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This applies only to British territories; there appears to be no colour bar amongst the French. *Vide W. B. Mumford and G. St. J. Oide Browne, Africans Learn to be French*, London, undated, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. B. Malinowski, *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> L. P. Mair, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-8, 179-180; cf. also J. D. Clarke, *Omu, an African Experiment in Education*, London, 1937, chapter xvi.

<sup>4</sup> *Higher Education in East Africa*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> L. P. Mair, *Overseas Education*, vol. vi, p. 57; quoted by J. D. Clarke, *op. cit.*, p. x.

Even in French Equatorial Africa, where the explicit intention of the Government is to turn the natives into French citizens—in contrast with British colonies, where the aim is to encourage their development along traditional lines—it has been found necessary to institute schools which are directly in touch with the conditions in which the people live.<sup>1</sup>

The Solomons, in so far as Malaita at least is concerned, are more fortunate than Africa, in that there is practically nothing to be undone, for the achievements of the Malu'u schools are slender in the extreme. Education, that is to say, can begin with a clean sheet; though the form it is to take has still to be decided. We are fortunate in having as a basis for consideration a scheme put forward by Mr. Groves in his *Native Education and Culture Contact in New Guinea*, for conditions in New Guinea and the Solomons are similar, and conclusions drawn with respect to the one are likely to have application to both.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Groves suggests that any system of native education must be based on the following principles: education shall be employed as an agent of natural growth and aim to serve the masses rather than the select few; further, it must be founded on native life and institutions, though where desirable or necessary these are to be adapted in conformity with modern requirements.<sup>3</sup>

The general aim should be to teach the natives to appreciate and use to their advantage the things around them and to give an elementary understanding of the causal relation in nature, so that the spectres of food shortage, disease, and sorcery are removed. In the end the people ought to be decent, healthy, satisfied individuals in a socially adjusted, progressive, and enlightened community, with all the worthwhile features of the old culture preserved and new activities and interests grafted on.<sup>4</sup> In detail, he says the aim must be, “to raise native standards, economic and material, moral and social; to improve housing and beautify village surroundings and raise the standard of personal hygiene; to improve the

<sup>1</sup> Though for European children and natives coming from homes where French is spoken schools modelled directly on those of France are provided (W. B. Mumford and G. St. J. Orde Browne, op. cit., chapter ii).

<sup>2</sup> W. C. Groves, *Native Education and Culture Contact in New Guinea*, Education Research Series, No. 46, Melbourne University Press, 1936.

<sup>3</sup> p. 65.

<sup>4</sup> p. 67.

methods of production and the nature of the food supply . . . ; to initiate group and individual economic projects which will provide the natives with the means to acquire European materials so as to simplify their everyday lives and ensure their greater personal comfort ; . . . to allow more time for leisure and provide the means of using it wisely.”<sup>1</sup>

“ The starting-point for this work in New Guinea is the fact that the natural life of the native is that of the village. No matter what changes come about through European contact, no matter what new elements are added to the old culture, the basic and inescapable fact is that the mass of the natives must live a rural life and continue to satisfy their material needs by tilling the soil.

“ There must therefore be a concentration of educational effort and enterprise upon the life and activities of the village. It is upon the life and stability of the village that the future of the natives depends.”<sup>2</sup>

“ In other words, education must be village-centred ; and all projects for the higher training of selected natives, whether practical or literary, must be directed towards fitting into the plan of village education. Higher education . . . will take the form mainly of preparing certain individuals to fit into the general system as village leaders, as visiting or resident teachers and instructors, and as specialists in different sides of village developmental work.”<sup>3</sup>

With this end in view Mr. Groves suggests the establishment in all villages of a type of institution which will fit itself into the life of adults as well as children. In the heart of the settlement there should be a special set of buildings, he says, to which the people will look for lead and direction. One building will be the village school, another the residence of the teacher, a third the club for holding meetings and entertainments, a fourth the church, and possibly a fifth to serve as a village dispensary or hospital. “ European tools, the property of the community, in the charge of a selected villager with a knowledge of their use, could be kept there, and a carpenter’s bench or two. . . . The furnishings of all these buildings would be of the simplest kind made by the people themselves from local materials. . . . In the wider field such institutions must become the centres for the initiation of community economic enterprises, the radiating point of

<sup>1</sup> p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 67-8.

<sup>3</sup> p. 121.

new interests and pastimes, the location of village entertainments, and the meeting-place of the village youth. They must, in fact, serve the same purposes (in addition to new ones) as did the men's houses of the past— with this important difference, that they will not be exclusive to men."<sup>1</sup>

So far as the school is concerned, two classes will be all that the one teacher in a village can manage. "The right idea would be to admit children at about the age of six to eight every second year, the course to cover four years. I am certain that, with the varied activities that will be expected of him, the native teacher, however efficient, could not conduct more than two groups in the school at the one time."<sup>2</sup>

Hygiene and agriculture, he believes, should be regarded as the two most important subjects, elementary science being used as the basis for instruction. "The idea of disease contagion through animal contacts and pests, should be demonstrated by local example and allusion, and the value of preventive measures taught. For if education fails to introduce reforms in sanitation and hygiene generally... surely all other measures for advancement in material and moral life are of no material value."<sup>3</sup> Speaking of agriculture, he points out that, as well as introducing new food crops, it ought also to be possible to encourage the cultivation of marketable products.

Native arts and crafts must also have a place in the curriculum. The scholars should be instructed in how to weave baskets, fishing nets, string bags, mats, belts, etc., how to carve canoes and food bowls, and so forth; and they should also be taught native music and dancing, as well as tribal legends and stories.<sup>4</sup> Games, both European and native, might also have a place under this heading.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, there are the conventional subjects, reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, and civics. Wherever possible local examples are to be used, and in simple calculations, for instance, problems which the natives themselves are likely to meet should be set. In geography and history also it must be remembered that knowledge about New Guinea is of greater value than information about Europe. Mr. Groves believes that two hours per day should

<sup>1</sup> pp. 122-3.

<sup>4</sup> pp. 84-90, 101.

<sup>2</sup> p. 126.

<sup>5</sup> pp. 97-8.

<sup>3</sup> p. 92.

give ample time to cover all the ground necessary so far as "literary" education is concerned.<sup>1</sup>

Language presents a serious problem, for, although in each school the local dialect must be taught, a *lingua franca* is from the practical point of view essential. Pidgin English, into which several books have already been translated, seems to meet this need best, since it is already universally spoken throughout New Guinea.

The teachers who are to conduct these village schools will require training at higher colleges under the direction of Europeans. Mr. Groves outlines a curriculum for such establishments and discusses the type of instruction which should be provided in order not only to equip young men for teaching village children but also for acting as leaders of the community life.<sup>2</sup> The teaching of English, as distinct from pidgin, is advocated in these colleges, and graduates would also be eligible for European employment as clerks. But at the same time, he says, care should be taken to preserve as the main aim the training of teachers for service in the villages.

Higher still than these colleges there might be a central institution where the most brilliant pupils could specialize in agriculture, etc., thus becoming eligible as supervisors and visiting instructors in special activities in the village schools.

Such a scheme will be expensive to operate, and it is scarcely possible for the Administration to provide sufficient funds to finance it fully. But most of the missions in New Guinea are already spending a good deal of money on their own village schools, which, in any case, they would not be prepared to abandon. In Mr. Groves's opinion, therefore, education should be subsidized by the Government, but the practical side might be left mainly in the hands of the missions. The Government, in addition, would have to undertake responsibility for fixing the curriculum, providing some of the training for teachers, and generally supervising the whole system to ensure that proper standards are being maintained. "With Government initiative, direction, and assistance," he says, "with missionary zeal for service; with the scientific data of anthropology; and with the confidence of the native

<sup>1</sup> pp. 108-114, 126.

<sup>2</sup> pp. 135-144.

peoples themselves in their own future ; what, indeed, may not one day be accomplished ! ”<sup>1</sup>

Sufficient has been said already, at the beginning of this section, to indicate that the general aims put forward by Mr. Groves are in agreement with the views of educationists in Africa, and it is unnecessary at this stage to emphasize the point further.<sup>2</sup> Worthy of note, however, is the fact that they corroborate his scheme in many of its details. Thus they also give pride of place to hygiene and agriculture, and an Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies stated in 1935 : “ Health is the foundation of any improvement in the life of the individual and the community. Health conditions, more than any other single factor, have hitherto retarded the advancement of African peoples. Little intellectual and moral growth is possible when physical health is wanting. The school both requires as its foundation, and at the same time can do much to promote, better physical conditions. It can give instruction in practical hygiene, inculcate sound habits of health, and explain the need and methods of improved sanitation. . . . An equally intimate relation exists, or should exist, between the school and agriculture. Its activities need to be correlated with the efforts of the agricultural department to improve the economic life of the community.”<sup>3</sup>

Two years later this statement was endorsed by the Commission appointed to report on education in East Africa : “ The main purpose of the East African Governments, in education as in all other matters, must for the present be the improvement of agriculture, animal husbandry, and health.

<sup>1</sup> P. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the review of Groves's book in *Africa*, vol. ix, pp. 229–232. In addition to the books and articles already referred to the following may also be consulted regarding the purpose of education in particular areas : W. B. Mumford, “ Education and the Social Adjustment of Primitive Peoples to European Culture,” *Africa*, vol. ii, pp. 138–159 ; W. Ilcernie, “ The Native Conception of Education in Africa,” *Africa*, vol. iv, pp. 145–163 ; F. Clarke, “ The Double Mind in African Education,” *Africa*, vol. v, pp. 158–168 ; W. B. Mumford and R. Jackson, “ The Problem of Mass Education in Africa,” *Africa*, vol. xi, pp. 187–207 ; D. Westermann, *The African To-day*, Oxford, 1934, chapters x and xi ; *Education in Pacific Countries* (ed. F. Keesing), Shanghai, 1937 ; A. P. Elkin, “ Education of Native Races in Pacific Countries,” *Oceania*, vol. vi, pp. 145–168 ; A. P. Elkin, “ Native Education, with Special Reference to the Australian Aborigines,” *Oceania*, vol. vii, pp. 459–500 ; etc.

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum on the Education of African Communities, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1935, Colonial No. 103, p. 7.

On the educational side, this means that primary schools must have a rural background and atmosphere, and that secondary and higher institutions must be conducted in such a way that the men and women whom they produce will be fitted to take their part . . . in a community which is mainly agricultural and entirely dependant upon the produce of the soil.<sup>1</sup>

The Commission also asserted that it would take as "axiomatic" the fact that "the primary need of East Africa is the improvement of health and agriculture".<sup>2</sup>

Further, the report, by explicit statement, urged that schools should be, as Mr. Groves suggests, community centres. This is also the objective of the Jeanes' system, a movement associated with schools in the negro states of America, in the Punjab, and, latterly, in Africa.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Groves's advocacy of elementary biology also finds confirmation in East Africa where, under the influence of Professor Julian Huxley, it is used as a basis for encouraging greater attention to hygiene and a rational attitude to phenomena formerly ascribed to supernatural causes.

Doubt has in some quarters been thrown, nevertheless, on his optimism concerning the possibility of a *rapprochement* between missions and the Administration.<sup>4</sup> But Government direction and mission execution has been achieved in parts of Africa<sup>5</sup> and, in the Pacific, in Papua, where, in addition to a subsidy, the Administration also provides a number of textbooks; and even in colonies where education is mainly in the hands of the Government, as for example Fiji, mission schools follow practically the same curriculum and receive official support.<sup>6</sup>

The Jeanes' movement has the provision of better village schools as its main aim, but there appears to be a divergence of views between Mr. Groves and some other African

<sup>1</sup> *Higher Education in East Africa*, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> J. W. C. Dougall, "School Education and Native Life," *Africa*, vol. iii, pp. 49-58.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., by the reviewer in *Africa*.

<sup>5</sup> R. Thurnwald, "The African in Transition," *Africa*, vol. xi, pp. 174-186.

<sup>6</sup> In French territories, however, the Administration considers itself under a binding obligation to provide schooling for all. Education is therefore financed solely by the government, and the pupils are not expected to pay fees. W. B. Mumford and G. St. J. Orde Browne, op. cit., p. 53.

authorities with regard to village education, in that many of the schools looked upon as models are boarding establishments. A much higher standard can no doubt be reached when the pupils are removed from their primitive home environment and brought under adequate supervision for the whole of their waking hours, but it is questionable whether in such circumstances contact with the actual life of the community can be adequately maintained. Mr. Clarke's interesting account of the Omu school in Nigeria unfortunately does not say anything about what happens after the pupils have completed their course and returned home: it would be interesting to know whether they are able to fit into their surroundings. Malangali in Tanganyika, also held up as an example to the rest of Africa, is another boarding school, but pupils are not accepted until they have already received some training in the village—that is to say, it provides secondary, not primary, education. Contact with the rest of the community is here maintained by a "resident board of governors" consisting of a few old men of standing.<sup>1</sup> At both Omu and Malangali the furnishing and materials, however, are of the simplest, as Mr. Groves also insists. Mr. Clarke says that at Omu he followed the rule, "Introduce into the school as much as possible *from* the home, but nothing which cannot be taken *to* it."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Groves's scheme for the education of the New Guinea natives is thus in no sense a revolutionary document: indeed, judged not by Pacific but by African standards it is almost conventional. Conditions in the Solomons, as has been mentioned, are practically identical with those in New Guinea, and there appears to be no reason why the scheme should not find acceptance in both territories. Certain modifications would no doubt be necessary, but these are of minor importance. The natives of Malaita, to quote one instance, do not live in villages: but the community centre, including the school, might be so placed as to serve a group of homesteads. This would avoid the problems which have arisen as a result of the long distances covered by the scholars in attending the Irombule school.

The need for teaching hygiene is just as pressing in the Solomons as in New Guinea and Africa, for experience has

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Mumford, "Malangali School," *Africa*, vol. iii, pp. 265-292.  
<sup>2</sup> J. D. Clarke, *Omu*, op. cit., p. 166.

shown that marked improvement in health cannot be expected until the natives are aware of the reasons why they should take precautions against infection. Thus the instruction given to-day to refrain from spitting in the house is not obeyed because the people are unaware of how such diseases as tuberculosis are spread. It has also been reported that native dressers who have been trained to boil their instruments, without being told why this is necessary, have no compunction about wiping them with filthy rags afterwards.

With regard to agriculture, the school could well be used as a means of introducing new fruits and vegetables both for home consumption and for sale. The old arts and crafts could also be encouraged. The Solomon Islanders used to have unsurpassed woodwork, which they inlaid with mother-of-pearl: their statuary was the equal of anything from West Africa, and their canoes were the most graceful in the whole of the Pacific. To-day these objects are no longer made, and although one occasionally comes across carved fonts and lecterns in churches they are almost invariably of shoddy workmanship (Plate XXI). But the tradition still lingers in many areas, and if some of the old men were invited to hold classes the dwelling houses and churches might be filled once more with objects of beauty.

A few missionaries and some of the natives themselves may be opposed to a reduction in the hours spent on "literary" subjects, but the best informed opinion seems to be against them. In any case, reading the Bible, the sole aim of many schools at present, is surely inadequate as a preparation for life.

Language presents the same difficulty in the Solomons as in New Guinea. Between sixty and seventy dialects are spoken in the eastern portion of the group alone, and it is obviously impossible to print books in all of them. The Melanesian Mission has abandoned its attempt to introduce Mota and is now beginning to work in English. The South Sea Evangelical Mission, on the other hand, carries out a certain amount of teaching in pidgin. The adoption of a native dialect as a universal language seems at this stage to be an impossibility, but it is a moot point whether English or pidgin is the better substitute, although in secondary institutions the former is certainly essential.

Finally, if co-operation between Administration and

missions has been achieved elsewhere, it should not be impossible in the Solomons. Up to the present the Administration has not spent one penny on education, but now that the natives are under control, and expensive punitive expeditions are no longer necessary, money ought to be available for the purpose. From the practical point of view it seems inevitable that the schools will remain under mission influence, but I feel sure that many missionaries would welcome competent advice and supervision if these are accompanied by a subsidy.

"It is freely admitted that the system would not be built up in a short time, nor would it be accomplished without many setbacks. It represents an ideal. But it is surely necessary to have an ideal, and to lay plans so far as possible for its attainment. I know that there are many . . . who will scoff at such an idea and regard it as quite impracticable, but educationists and missionaries with the necessary vision will not be discouraged by this fact, for scepticism and scorn have marked the attitude of the people concerned to every project ever devised for the development of the native. The whole scheme will demand unshakable purpose and constant faith in the ideal on the part of those directing and pursuing it; and it will also demand the whole-hearted co-operation of all agencies concerned with the natives' welfare. But more important still, it will depend for success upon the degree of confidence the natives themselves come to have in it, and their conviction of the disinterestedness of those concerned with its establishment and conduct."<sup>1</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

I have given this chapter the title, "Building for To-morrow," for if the principle of trusteeship—which His Majesty's Government has agreed to accept—is to mean anything at all plans for the future of these people must be made now. Since the natives have been brought under control, the Administration, in so far as it may be said to have had a "policy", has merely dealt with problems when this could no longer be avoided. The same might also be said of the missions, except that for the most part they have been so occupied with the religious life of the natives that they have usually been unaware of anything else. The

<sup>1</sup> W. C. Groves, op. cit., pp. 123-4.

attitude of both is in some ways analogous to that of municipal authorities who carry out town planning piecemeal ; and just as the attempt to reduce congestion of traffic at one particular point without reference to the needs of the city as a whole creates even more serious congestion at other points, so the attempt to settle social problems without reference to the general needs of the society creates its own crop of troubles. In the circumstances, indeed, it is difficult to see what else was possible, and one may congratulate Administrative officials and missionaries that the position is not far worse. To-day, however, reforms need no longer be delayed, though it must always be remembered that planning without knowledge—knowledge of human behaviour in general and of the societies of the Solomon Islands in particular—will be worse than useless : the consequences of every reform proposed must be accurately envisaged, or the result will be chaos.

"In to-day already walks to-morrow," and for the clear-sighted two distant prospects are emerging—on the one hand, an independent, self-sufficient, contented people and, on the other, an ill-adjusted collection of individuals incapable of governing themselves and united only in resistance to the foreigner. Which is it to be ? The natives themselves are at this stage in no position to choose, so that the obligation for the decision must rest on the Administration and missions.



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